

Shan Chun

Major Aspects of Chinese Religion and Philosophy

Dao of Inner Saint and Outer King

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Book Blurbs

Shan Chun, *Major Aspects of Chinese Religion and Philosophy: Dao of Inner Saint and Outer King*

In his capacious work “Major Aspects of Chinese Religion and Philosophy-Dao of Inner Saint and Outer King” Shan Chun does not only explore the innate relations between Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism since their origins till its recent developments. By relating the three major traditions of Chinese philosophy he also attempts to concentrate the New-Confucianism on its unified origins and substantial implications by applying its inherent endeavour to relate and unite all spheres: these topics being the intimate relations between religion and philosophy, their inner and outer way (including the correlation between Confucian and Daoist legacies) as well as the unity between cosmos (heaven), country, state, society and family.

According to the Confucian doctrine of the relation between wisdom and virtue as Inner Saint and the creation of a conducive socio-political environment as Outer King both spheres are meant to harmonize (*nei sheng wai wang zhi dao*).

Mirroring the micro and the macro cosmic world the volume is structured in two parts: The first part entails nine chapters—beginning with a historical survey about the ‘Holy triangle’ of Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism. The second part—entailing further eleven chapters—develops the cosmopolitical idea (*tian xia*) of the socio-political function of the external king with reference to the political implications of the natural right.

This work traces three major Chinese intellectual traditions in their origins and attempts to revive them as spiritual resources in Chinese current endeavors to build “a harmonious society” and “a harmonious world”. Therefore it would readily attract both scholars specialized in the academics concerned and readers at large with a strong desire to understand Confucian cosmopolitanism as the latest mission in “a unified harmonious world”.

Prof. Dr. Claudia Bickmann
Professor of Philosophy, University of Cologne, Germany

Professor Shan Chun’s masterful introduction to traditional Chinese ways of thinking, embodied in the “three teachings” of Confucianism, Daoism, and

Buddhism, provides a refreshing and insightful assessment of China's enduring ability to accommodate diverse perspectives within a unified and harmonious framework. His comprehensive command over Chinese sources and his comparisons with Western examples will be welcome to all interested in understanding how Chinese religious, philosophical, and political concepts are intertwined. An interesting work that reveals how traditional Chinese thinking is informing contemporary Chinese perspectives.

Albert Welter

Professor of East Asian Religions, Chair of the Department of Religion & Culture and Coordinator of the East Asian Languages & Cultures Program, University of Winnipeg, Canada

I read *Major Aspects of Chinese Religion and Philosophy: Dao of Inner Saint and Outer King* with great interest. Shan Chun presents a fascinating and informative historical account of how Chinese philosophers harmonized the tensions between its three major faith traditions—Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. Well-chosen comparisons with similar struggles in Western thought illuminate the discussion. This book will be a valuable resource for those seeking a deeper understanding of Chinese philosophy and religion.

Richard N. Stichler

Professor of Philosophy, Alvernia University, USA

Shan Chun's *Major Aspects of Chinese Religion and Philosophy: Dao of Inner Saint and Outer King* is a comprehensive work with sharp insights into the nature of China's spiritual traditions. For those who are confused about whether Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism are to be viewed as religion or philosophy, the author puts the question to rest through an evocative image. The 'Chinese nation', he says, 'is particularly good at ideological reconciliation in which philosophy and religion have been transformed into dancing partners in its gracefully durable history'.

So, too, the idea of wisdom and virtue as Inner Saint and the creation of a conducive socio-political environment as Outer King are meant to harmonize. The concept, which forms the title of the book, comes from the Confucian Doctrine of Being Internal or Inner Saint and External or Outer King (*Nei Sheng Wai Wang Zhi Dao*). Part One deals with the Inner Saint in nine chapters, beginning with a historical survey of the 'faith triangle' of Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism and concluding with a Confucian perspective on the Enlightenment and religion. Part Two on Outer King moves through eleven chapters that include Chinese cosmopolitanism (*Tian Xia*) and the political implications of natural justice in The Doctrine of the Mean (*Zhong Yong*).

This is a work that will satisfy both the curious non-specialist and the seasoned scholar in its treatment of a highly pertinent topic to the future of China, and not only its past. Harmonious Society and Harmonious World are now the mantras of Chinese policymakers in their efforts to give governance (the Outer King) an inner value that derives from China's rich traditions.

Rosita Dellios

Associate Professor of International Relations, Bond University, Australia

This book presents a very revealing view of how a learned, serious Chinese intellectual understands the diverse riches to be found in the Chinese tradition. Attempting to cover virtually all of the Chinese philosophical and religious traditions and relate them to Western ideas, it also is willing to pursue normative conclusions and discuss their applicability to modern life.

Lee H. Yearley

Walter Y. Evans-Wentz Professor, Religious Studies, Stanford University,
USA

Preface

It is obligatory to provide a commentary clue as a preface to my book since the theme dealt with contents more antique and national than they appear to be. Even for Chinese general readers they may not be fully prepared for classical Chinese words and phrases unless they have received special education for them, and they can be equally estranged from its theme unless they are specialized in the academic areas concerned. For these two reasons, such a commentary clue would be assumed helpful for non-Chinese readers, or at least it can serve as the perspective of the native thinker for those non-Chinese thinkers who may specialize in the relative areas.

Chinese scholarship or classical thinking had never been categorized as the disciplines of Greek Aristotelian type before they were introduced to Chinese intellectuals in the nineteenth century. For 2H civilizations, i.e., the Hebrew religion and the Hellenic philosophy, the world has been divided into two dimensions, one for the natural world in which everything is governed by objective laws and their essential qualities are calculated as obligatory principles, and one for the spiritual world in which every idea is guided by subjective wills and their innate capacities are evaluated as discretionary choices. These two dimensions can be academically categorized as natural sciences and humanities, which, in western antiquity, were basically mirrored in Greek philosophy including natural philosophy and Hebrew religion including the Abrahamic faiths system. After the intellectual supremacy of Aristotelian disciplines in the west, these 2H civilizations have been transformed in the conventions of religion and philosophy. Distinguished from this division of religion and philosophy, or Jerusalem and Athens, Chinese thinkers projected a picture of the unified world to their antiquity in the methodology of Integration between Heaven and Human (*tianren heyi*), in which Dao or Way was worshipped as the cosmic entity, dynamics and human principles. Unity in diversity was not a principle to welcome or reject, but an innate cultural device for Chinese scholars in their observing and reflecting the relations between heaven and human. For them what had been categorized as disciplines as philosophy and religion were all in the domains of the relations between heaven and human subject to Dao as the universal principle. For Confucius, Dao had been

dominant in social ethics, for Lao Zi, Dao in ontology and cosmology, for Mencius in moral rights and social revolutions, for Zhuang Zi in spiritual happiness, for Legalists in institutional validities. Thus all, disciplines under heaven were nothing more than the facets of Dao in its human world. However, this Dao scholarship combining the natural world and spiritual exploration was mystically corresponded with in Immanuel Kant in his epistemological revolution, i.e., associating the natural world with human faculty of sensation, perception and reason, and attributing the spiritual world with human faculty of pure reason. For Kant, human faculties targeting the natural world were contingent to other objective conditions, while human faculty employed in the spiritual world was motivated initiatively by its subjective free wills. This is parallel to Chinese Dao of inner saint and outer king in methodology, but Chinese thinkers expanded the mindset into a far wider scholarship from epistemology to cosmology, politics, ethics, and religion.

If metaphysical Dao is acknowledged in its physical ramifications, what aspects does it reveal of Chinese religion?

When Chinese scholars tell of “The Three Religions (*sanjiao*)”, they may indicate much of the similar messages concerning western religion besides their rich senses in other fields, but these religious messages are meticulously implied in humanities other than divine miracles. Among these three “religions (*jiao*)” or “teachings (*jiao*)”, they are phonetically identical in the same Chinese word, Confucianism exposed its religious facets as the supreme principle for monarchical politics in the Han Dynasty, emphasizing “Heaven” as the sole legitimacy of the human empire. Daoism emerged as a plebian religion in the later Han Dynasty for their life and natural rights when they were driven to the wall. Buddhism was introduced into China from India, from the Han to the Wei and Jin Dynasties before it attained to its religious prosperity in the Tang Dynasty. Ever since, these three religions were accepted as the mainstay of Chinese faith system.

The spirit of Chinese culture and national faith should coincide with Chinese views about world and human life. In the Integration between Heaven and Human, all physical beings, mainly human beings, are born with heavenly benevolence, therefore Confucianism particularly attentive to human life and its social morals became the chief civilian faith and official ideology in Chinese society, which fabricated the corresponding moral principles of filial piety, loyalty, and righteousness to family, country, and the world under heaven. All members in society were thus entitled with religiously moral capacity: civilians as heavenly citizen (*tianmin*), emperors as heavenly sons (*tianzi*), all persons as having heavenly conscience (*tianliang*).

With Chinese tradition, mainly from Confucian faith on the heavenly mandates, modern Chinese scholars based themselves on Marxism, western religion studies, and the introduction of Buddhism in contributing their reflections on religion and came to a general definition for religion as one connoting four chief elements (*siyaosu shuo*), namely transcendent concept, intuitional experience, religious activities, and institutions. In the Chinese faith system Confucianism is historically and intellectually distinguished in its commitment to the concept of heaven, which justified modern Confucian scholars in their translation of the

Catholic into “The Religion of Heaven Master (*tianzhujiao*)”. Therefore, the concept of heaven has a predominant place in the Chinese faith system, with Confucianism in particular. As a key the concept in Chinese faith system, heaven implies the messages from the natural, political, institutional, social, individual, and national dimensions. In contrast with the western nations as “the nation of one book”, the Chinese might be metaphorically depicted as “the nation mandated to the heaven”, obviously evidenced in their practice of “worshipping the heaven and ancestors (*jingtianjizu*)”. For the Chinese influenced by Confucianism, their religious commitments are invariably expressed in their world views and family affections. They think that all human beings are born and brought up in the family, and the world is nothing but an enlarged family, so the social ethics applicable in the world could be dearly felt and encouraged from the family blood ties epitomized morally as “humaneness (*ren*)”, phonetically identical to both human and human relations. With this humaneness as the cosmic heart, any person thus religiously committed, should love his family members, social members, and even all beings in the world, since they are all equal members born by heaven, surviving on the earth as brothers and sisters.

Religious Daoism (*daojiao*) is widely acknowledged as the religion indigenous to China with more affinities to western religions. It borrowed its cosmology from Philosophical Daoism (*daojia*) in its natural evolution instead of God’s creation, and thus stimulated religious Daoists in seeking life eternity of natural beings like tortoise and crane. They were more initiatively active in making pills of immortality by consolidating cosmic air in their bellies and taking the outer pills of chemical, mineral, and herbal ingredients. Despite its superficial illusions about nature and eternal life, their religious maneuvers tinged the religion with practitioners’ subjective efforts towards a better life after death rather than being passively salvaged. Its social moral was highly accountable for its love for individual life rather than Confucian commitments for social responsibility.

Chinese Buddhism is the only one among the three religions introduced from India, yet adapted to Chinese spirituality for social equality by way of intellectual revolution of Chan or Zen Buddhism. Indian Buddhism had two phases to preach in China. Its religious mission in the first phase was to preach *prajñā*, or the Buddhist epistemology, drastically alien to Chinese humaneness oriented Confucianism and Daoist eternal life expectation in being the immortal. But its religious mission in the second phase was to advocate nirvana, or the Buddhist philosophy of life, unexpectedly catering to Chinese Confucians and Daoists in their spiritual pursuits. Although the Buddha nature theory was not much favored among Indian Buddhists, it was gradually accepted and eventually worshipped as the spiritual gospel for Chinese Chan Buddhists to coincide with Confucian heart-nature-mandate doctrine and Daoist equal distribution of metaphysical Dao to all diversified physical beings. The universal Buddha nature thus better evaluated in Chinese society where equality and fairness for individual human life were much anticipated in religious Confucianism and Daoism than it was in Indian society where caste was preached in Hinduism.

In the integration between heaven and human, either its moral aspect or physiological aspect was always advocated by religious Confucians and Daoists. Since the Daoist focus on mental-cultivation (*xiuxing*) was eclipsed by its cosmic-air cultivation, Confucian endeavors on human dignity was spectacularly explored and socially encouraged. As human dignity is mainly associated with moral sense, Confucian thinkers effectively established a faith market among Chinese civilians for their saint personality as a “great husband (*dazhangfu*)” morally defying powerful authorities, superrich corruption, and begging poverty.

The humanistic facet of Confucianism and Daoism had much influence on western Enlightenment thinkers by the translation and introduction of Jesuit missionaries. Since the Catholic and religious authorities had been suppressing too hard on their European citizens, those thinkers managed by all means to peddle themselves as humanists encouraged and accompanied by Chinese Confucian humanists. Therefore, a comparison offered in the book would provide an academically balanced frame to rethink and reevaluate the relations between Religion and Enlightenment.

All the messages and concepts discussed in this part could be more or less connected with the area of “inner saint” in the Dao of Inner Saint and Outer King, which had intuitional, national, and historical elements intricately involved with it if readers prefer to approach that way.

As for the area of “outer king”, I purposely diverted my observation and reflection to the epistemology of intimate human experience from history and natural environment, the political philosophy, and the philosophy of life which exhibit their amazing feats of Confucianism and Daoism, though not peculiarly striking in Chinese Buddhism. In the western philosophical tradition, philosophy has been unanimously related as the spiritual quintessence of historical ages. But the Enlightenment Movement provoked challenging arguments, some scholars proclaiming “an epistemological turn” has been dominating western philosophy while some others insisting that philosophy is still on its historical track of “the rehearsal of death”. Instructively, these confusing arguments do not bother Chinese philosophy too much, both philosophies of Chinese tradition and Marxist tradition firmly stick to the unity of philosophical branches, either defining philosophy as the Dao of Inner Saint and Outer King or as the unification between world views and human values. For both of them, such unity expresses steadily the spirit of Chinese philosophy, and such spirit was termed as the sphere of living or the sphere of mentality (*jingjie*).

In the frame “Integration between Heaven and Human”, the sphere of mentality has a visible predilection to human values instead of the world structure and human faculty to explore the objective world. This predilection justified Feng Youlan, the most influential philosopher as well as philosophical historian in his clue to spotlight the features of Chinese philosophy at its specific ages. In the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period, the spirit of Chinese philosophy was mirrored in the Scholarship of Originative Thinkers (*zhuzixue*). In the Han Dynasty, there was the prosperity in the Scholarship of Confucian Classics (*jingxue*). In the Wei and Jin Dynasties, the academic grace was thrown on Daoist

Metaphysics (*xuanxue*). In the Sui and Tang Dynasties, Chinese Buddhism (*foxue*) was in exceptional profile for civilian and intellectual Chinese. In the Song and Ming Dynasties, Neo-Confucianism brought Dao Scholarship (*daoxue*) back to the focus of academics, which can be further subdivided into Rational Sect (*lixue*), Intuitionist Sect (*xinxue*), and Cosmic Air Sect (*qixue*). In the Qing Dynasty, the ethnic Chinese from the Northeastern China came to rule the whole of China and suppressed Chinese Confucian scholars by a notorious policy of “charges by word-fabrication (*wenziyu*)”. These are the basic aspects of Chinese philosophy in its history.

Philosophical Daoism was basically suggested by *The Works of Lao Zi* and *The Works of Zhuang Zi*. For Lao Zi, his works is barely an essay of no more than 5,000 words. Much similar to the formally organized collection of adages, Lao Zi had his wisdom on ontology, cosmology, and politics cogently exhibited in those rhythmically balanced phrases. We approach Lao Zi from all aspects of a modern philosophical system except the initiative subjectivity, yet this intellectual sorry was compensated exactly by Zhuang Zi. For modern citizens, all kinds of physical travels may seem feasible unless technically or commercially qualified. An astronaut or a billionaire may realize their dreams of space travel by means of their technique or money, but how did an ancient Chinese philosopher realize his universal travel? He realized it by his mentality of cosmic liberty. He masterfully demonstrated how a universal travel could be realized by mentality of cosmic liberty that permanently attract his readers beyond time and space. A reader of Zhuang Zi could be spiritually happier than he was otherwise actually anticipated.

The philosophical aspect of Chinese Buddhism is mainly expressed in its unity of epistemology and value orientation, which still reveals the advantage of Indian Buddhism and its reconciliation with Chinese Confucianism (*tianxia*) and Daoism which focused mainly on human values. Yet its epistemology can be compared with western epistemology to see its mental merits in interweaving cosmology and epistemology in peculiarly analytical sophistication. For these academic specialties, an influential modern Chinese Buddhist philosopher Ouyang Jingwu declared that Buddhism was superior to both religion and philosophy. My analysis in this chapter mainly targets its philosophical aspect which will render some references to readers for their assessments.

The unity of the Chinese world view and value orientation can be equally evaluated in regarding their traditional terms in Chinese philosophy, namely the studies on Chinese Cosmopolitanism and the moral happiness of Confucius and Yan Hui (*kongyan lechu*). Some scholars or philosophical historians would pick cosmopolitanism as the token of Chinese traditional world view and the moral happiness of Confucius and Yan Hui as the epitome of Chinese traditional philosophy of life. Their demonstrations have been arranged and evaluated in Chinese history and Confucian individual commitments.

As the mainstay of Chinese philosophy, Confucianism was organized into three classical systems, namely The Thirteen Classics (*shisanjing*), The Five Classics (*wujing*), and The Four Books (*sishu*). After the Song Dynasty, The Four Classics had been the dominant texts for Chinese civil service examinations (*keju kaoshi*)

before it was abolished in the 1911 Revolution. Therefore, the philosophical aspects revealed in The Four Books can be identical to the comprehensive facets of “Outer King”. Confucius, mainly in his *Analects*, established his humaneness oriented philosophy to consolidate the rule of proprieties which had been invented as the authoritative legality to rule China. In this sense, Confucius was a revolutionary thinker for the politics of the Zhou Dynasty and a moral teacher for the society of the Big Chaos where the ruling propriety and music had been severely violated (*libeng yehuai*). Mencius, in *The Works of Mencius*, served as the second patriarchal master of Confucian tradition before the Qin Dynasty and his intellectual contribution to Chinese society should be accounted on the moral rights for all human beings and their justification in conducting social revolutions if the rulers proved to be a solitude thief of public rights or solitary public thief (*dufu minzei*). *The Great Learning* has less connection with objective knowledge taught in the schools or universities as it seems to be. Literally, it bears the connotation of how an ordinary person can become great in society by way of Confucian philosophy. It provided a concise clue from cultivating one personality to ruling the world as a great king. *The Doctrine of the Means*, likewise, did not mean the moderate method in administering affairs or thinking in a balanced way, but aimed at the natural justice fortifying people with natural rights to expect the rule of saint king and the world of natural harmony.

The above-mentioned clues may serve as a minimum introduction to what Chinese religion and philosophy might seem to be at their first glimpse and their Modern adaptations to western intellectual traditions as revived through Renaissance and Enlightenment. Apart from these concluding sentences, with immense gratitude, I would focus on these names for their suggestions, instructions, encouragements, and patience, paramountly conducive to the completion of this book from proposing, criticizing, editing, typesetting, printing, and even writing blurbs. They are Prof. Claudia Bickmann, Prof. Albert Welter, Prof. Richard N. Stichler, Associate Prof. Rosita Dellios, Prof. Lee H. Yearley, Dr. Thomas Niels Peter, and Dr. Leana Li. My thanks would invariably go to Ruhr-University Bochum for my honor of being Bochum Fellow in 2008 in the International Consortium Research of “Dynamics in the History of Religions”.

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Part I
Inner Saint: Some Aspects
of Chinese Religion

Chapter 1

Chinese Faith Triangle: Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism

Introduction

Confucianism, Daoism (or Taoism), and Buddhism, abbreviated as the “Three Religions” or “Three Teachings” (*sanjiao*), have been commonly accepted as the mainstay of Chinese culture and their religious and philosophical essentials constitute the main focus of Chinese style scholarship. Similar to other leading spiritual traditions of the axial age, they originated and acquired their forms in China around the Yangtze and Yellow Rivers about 2,000 years ago, gradually solidifying into the main body of the Chinese faith system. Dissimilar to the spiritual traditions of ancient Egypt, Israel, Athens, Rome, and India, the Chinese faith system, consisting of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism, has religion and philosophy in their specific dimensions coinciding with each other, exhibiting a unity between being inner saint and outer king in human endeavors. Specialized in its sustained heritage and creative adaption to alien cultures, such a faith system has been identifying its adherents all around the world as Chinese people toward a common spiritual DNA and conceptual base for her national renaissance.

In the process of the Chinese nation, Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism have been constantly showing their religious or philosophical shades at different phases of history or at different levels of social structures. Therefore, scholars in general or their distinctive adherents in particular, approach them in the perspective of philosophy as ‘Confucian Scholarship (*ruxue*)’, ‘Daoist Scholarship (*daojia*)’, and ‘Buddhist Scholarship (*foxue*)’ or in the dimension of religion as ‘Confucian Doctrine (*rujiao*)’, ‘Daoist Doctrine (*daojiao*)’, and ‘Buddhist Doctrine (*fojiao*)’, leaving their spiritual situations confused in concepts but feasibly reciprocated in practice. Neither Chinese scholars nor Chinese specific disciples would be earnestly offended for being approached as either philosophers or religious followers, as they could always be managing and behaving themselves adequately in the interdisciplinary area according to their physical surroundings and mental moods. Recalling the theme proposed by an American sociologist:

Confucius: The Secular as Sacred,¹ one would be amused how the Chinese in their spiritual and social domains harmoniously and peacefully have been integrating those superficially confounding ideas or arrangements. The secret behind the Chinese tradition might be that the Chinese nation as a whole is particularly good at ideological reconciliation in which philosophy and religion have been transformed into dancing partners in its gracefully durable history.

Among ‘the three religions’ (*sanjiao*), Confucianism and Daoism originated in China before the Qin Dynasty (221–206 B.C.) as the indigenous spiritual traditions, while Buddhism was introduced from India in the later years of the Western Han Dynasty (206 B.C.–25 A.D.) about 2,000 years ago, which was gradually assimilated into Chinese Buddhism specified as Tian Tai Denomination, Hua Yan Denomination, Zen or Chan Denomination, and the Pure Land Denomination intermingled with Zen. It had been 300–400 years before Zen Denomination revolutionized Indian Buddhism in a way of remolding its ‘Buddha Nature Theory’ (*foxing lun*) under the auspices of Confucian ‘Heart-Nature Theory’ (*xinxing lun*) and Daoist ‘Metaphysics’ (*xuanxue*),² hence accomplishing the follow-ups of Chinese Zen or Chan Buddhism in the neighboring countries like Korea, Vietnam, and Japan.

Basically, what appeared in the Chinese political and social contexts as ‘The Golden Times of Han and Tang Dynasties’ (*hantang shengshi*) were the embodiments of the reciprocal triangle among Confucians, Daoists, and Legalists, and competitively complementary involvements among Confucians, Daoists, and Buddhists. And then the academic peak attained in the Song and Ming Dynasties was the creative transformation through intellectual challenges and adaptations among Confucians, Daoists, and Buddhists. Therefore, the common features gradually formed in the process of confrontations and assimilations among Confucians, Daoists and Buddhists in Chinese civilized traditions were explicitly depicted as

“There are three main points in Chinese scholarship, namely that one may not be able to administer in society without reading *The Spring and Autumn Annals* (the masterpiece believed to be compiled by Confucius, more authentic to *The Analects of Confucius*, or the recalled conversations between Confucius and his disciples); one may not be able to refuse social attractions without his commitment to *the Works of Lao Zi (Lao Tzu)* and *Zhuang Zi (Chuang Tzu)*; one may not be able to free from social confinement without sitting in Zen or Chan meditation.”³

¹ Herbert Fingarette, *Confucius: The Secular as Sacred* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977).

² ‘Buddha Nature Theory’ declares every sentient being has an independent and perceptual quality witnessing universal wisdom and compassion. Confucian ‘Heart-Nature Theory’ tells the universal faculty of human heart to speculate and feel morally, with nature in essence for all natural beings equally subject to human intelligent reflections. Daoist ‘Metaphysics’ believes in the distinction between Transcendent Dao (*changdao*) and Physical Dao (*kedao*), the former being universally holy law and the latter being particularly empirical.

³ See Fang Litan, *Chinese Buddhist Philosophy (fojiao zhixue)* (Beijing: The Renmin University Press, 1991), pp. 53–54. *The Spring and Autumn Annals (chunqiu)* is thought to be the authentic work of Confucius instead of *the Analects of Confucius (lunyu)*, which was the compilation posthumously based on his conversations with his students.

To be more comprehensive and precise, the most conspicuous embodiments of Chinese spirituality which has been sustaining for more than twenty-five centuries are ascertained in the interreciprocal relations among Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism, in addition to Chinese imperial administration, an enduringly consolidated territory, and the multi-ethnic integration of the Chinese nation spanning from the Qin and Han Dynasties to the Qing Dynasty as well as the Republic of China.

Confucianism and Daoism in the Qin and Han Dynasties (221 B.C.–220 A.D.)

In the Chinese administrative system, including the four specific phases (1) the Slavery System in the Xia and Shang Dynasties, (2) the Feudalist System in the Zhou Dynasty, (3) the Imperial System from the Qin to the Qing Dynasties, and (4) both Modern Democratic Systems in the Republic of China and the People's Republic of China, Confucianism has been serving as the chief ideology, either conspicuously declared in the Han Dynasty or speculatively criticized in the Great Cultural Revolution (1966–1976 A.D.) and ambiguously promoted by agencies of Confucian Institutes worldwide in People's Republic of China, and its being secular in social administration has been stable and authoritative ever since its introduction into imperial rule as the substitute replacing the ideologies of Daoism in The Rule of Inaction (*wuwei er zhi*) and of Legalism in its merciless despotism in the Qin Dynasty (206 B.C.–220 A.D.). The Confucian Ideology, despite its being declared exclusively official in the Han Dynasty, has ever since been challenged, rectified, and reinforced by Legalists and other schools of thought, since it had its political constancy in 'country-ruling and world-harmonizing' (*zhiguo pingtianxia*). Initiated by Confucius in remolding The Ruling System of Propriety and Music (*liyue zhidu*) established by the founding father of the Zhou Dynasty (1046–256 B.C.), Duke Zhou (*zhou gong*) with the moral orientation in 'Confucian Humaneness and Mencian Righteousness' (*kongren mengyi*), the Confucian Classics were officially declared to be the ideological supremacy justifying all imperial undertakings from civil service examinations to criminal justice in the Han Dynasty, with directives issued by Emperor Wu Di (*han wu di*) Confucian classics being turned into the political doctrines in the form of the heavenly mandates, a situation similar to what Spinoza observing the Old Testament as political theology. At this point, a popular commentary depicted Confucianism in the Han Dynasty as 'Saint Religion' (*shengjiao*) or 'Confucian Religion' (*rujiao*), governing a whole spectrum of 'self-regulating, family establishing, country ruling, and world harmonizing' (*xiushen qijia zhiguo pingtianxia*). As a self-acknowledged classic concerning social history of his motherland, Dukedom Lu, Confucius anticipated that he would be assessed and estimated by future generations for his political and pedagogical missions in line with his

compiling Spring and Autumn Annals, exclaiming “If you read to understand *the Spring and Autumn Annals*, you may extol me with merits; if you read to misunderstand *the Spring and Autumn Annals*, you may defame me with demerits.”⁴ As a political tradition during Confucius’ lifetime, historiography was the official documentary for governmental consultancy; no individual scholar should be allowed to undertake such business unless nominated officially as history recording officer. Obviously violating this traditional regulation, Confucius endeavored his initiative to compile *the Spring and Autumn Annals*, morally stationing himself above Zhou’s Emperor (*zhou tian zi*) to summarize political advantage and disadvantage. For his intellectual bravery in political ambition of ‘country-ruling and world-harmonizing’, his followers must cook up some political miracles in order to worship him together with the secular kings and a title ‘King without Crown’ (*suwang*) was thus conferred on him in a religious mood.

Before Han Wu Di established the ideological authority of Confucianism, it had been a period of transition for four emperors and one empress with the enthronement of the Han Dynasty. The Han Dynasty was the succeeding authority to replace the Qin Dynasty in series of social rebellions. The Qin Dynasty was the first powerful empire that had united the disputed warring states in the late Zhou Dynasty, but suffered the shortest fate of only 15 years for its sovereignty. Attributing its quick collapse to the ideology of Legalists who advocated the rule of “unified roads for cart, unified characters for writing and unified virtue for behaviour.” (*che tong gui, shu tong wen, xing tong lun*), the political consultants both from Daoists and Confucians suggested their own ideological substitutes, being, respectively, the ‘Rule of Inaction’ (*wuwei er zhi*) and the ‘Human Obligations to Heavenly Mandates’ (*tianren guanxi*). The first few emperors of the Han Dynasty accepted both political advices to rectify Legalist despotism in the Qin Dynasty with Daoist as the immediate means to pacify the pressing sufferings of the people and Confucian ethics as the value orientation for a mild politics, thus triggering off the first political passion for Daoism.

Even today the ordinary Chinese would be proud of being identified as ‘the Offspring of Yellow Emperor’ (*huangdi zisun or yanhuang zisun*), manifesting possibly the antiquity of their life affiliation. And this was also evidenced in the first stage of Daoism in the beginning of the Han Dynasty when ‘Scholarship of Yellow Emperor and Lao Zi’ (*huanglao zhixue*) was authorized as the ideology to remedy Qin’s Legalist despotism. As the legend goes, Yellow Emperor was the hero who first conquered and united the world of the ancient Chinese perspective, so he was naturally chosen as the token to break the evil spell cast on the Qin Dynasty, and combined with “Daoist Abiding by Nature” (*dao faziran*) of Lao Zi, Yellow Emperor and Lao Zi were worshipped as the political doctrines in the early Han Dynasty to ensure a holy stable sovereignty as sustainable as the natural world. Such worship based on political remedy and ethnic legendary was accurately summed up in *The Book of Changes* as “Yellow Emperor, Yao and Shun

⁴ Teng Wen Gong Xia, *The Works of Mencius* (*mengzi, tengwengong xia*).

ruled the world under the heaven by tidy dressings, distinguishing coats and trousers vertically like upper sky and downward earth.”⁵ The virtues revealed in the natural world suggested to Han people in two dimensions, one being longevity in natural harmony and another being free from exploitation, resulting in both ‘Rule of Inaction’ in politics and ‘No-Exploitation on People’ (*yumin xiuxi*). And the application of Daoist doctrines in the early Han Dynasty did eventually bring about ‘the Prosperity of Emperor Wen and Jing’ (*wenjing zhi zhi*). To associate this social prosperity with ‘the Golden Times of Emperor Wu’, we are pretty safe to state that both Daoism and Confucianism in the Han Dynasty were great successes in being either political theology or civilian religion.

Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism in the Wei and Jin Dynasties (220–589 A.D.)

The Wei and Jin Dynasties were the periods succeeding the Han Dynasty, full of political turmoil and bordering invasions from northwestern nomadic tribes which eventually caused China to be divided by the Yangtze River. There have been four ‘Separate Rules of China by the Yangtze River’ or briefed as ‘Southern Movement by Crossing the Yangtze River’ (*nandu*) in Chinese history, successively: Southern Movement in the Jin Dynasty, Southern Movement in the Song Dynasty, Southern Movement in the Ming Dynasty, and Southern Movement in the Republic of China. Therefore, the first Southern Movement in the Jin Dynasty witnessed the decaying moral and splitting solidarity which eclipsed Confucianism as valid ideology to unite the country and impelled Daoism to develop in the form of folk religion. The weakening and oblivion of the native ideology at this juncture unconsciously assisted the rapid spread of Buddhism in China.

This was the time when politically ambitious Confucians chose to integrate with Daoists, resulting in the emergence of a New Daoist Movement, also called ‘Daoist Metaphysics’. Despite being ‘metaphysically’ free from the ‘physical’, social, and political arena, many intellectuals either in the capacity of New Daoists or Confucians were persecuted and executed under various pretexts as observed in “There was recurrent chaos between the Wei and Jin Dynasties, therefore many celebrated scholars could not reach their natural terms.”⁶ Therefore, Daoism was forced to develop in two dimensions, one in metaphysically ‘romantic’ and the other in politically ‘religious’.

For Daoist romance, there was a popular identity figuratively described as “Intellectuals in the Jin Dynasty are romantic” (*jinren fengliu*), compared to

⁵ Xi Ci Xia, *The Book of Changes* (*zhouyi, xicizhuan xia*).

⁶ Fang Xuanling, “Biography of Ruan Ji in The History of the Jin Dynasty (*jinshu, ruanji zhuan*),” in *The Twenty-Four Histories* (Version of Simplified Chinese) (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 2000), Vol. 49, p. 899.

“Intellectuals in the Han Dynasty are ambitious” (*hanren xiongwei*), “Intellectuals in the Tang Dynasty are generous” (*tangren kuoda*) and “Intellectuals in the Song Dynasty are serious” (*songren yansu*). The New Daoists were romantic in four aspects sourced from the metaphysically amusing stories read in *Essays and Criticism* (*shishuo xinyu*), which were epitomized by Feng Youlan or previously spelt as Fung You-lan (Feng Youlan or Fung Yulan) as ‘metaphysical heart’ (*xuanxin*), ‘fascinating insights’ (*dongjian*), ‘aesthetic amusement’ (*miaoshang*), and ‘affectionate sincerity’ (*shenqing*).⁷ For a better understanding of the transition from metaphysical Daoism to religious Daoism, I feel obliged to briefly explain the four figurative sayings as intellectual contexts. In both the Han and Tang Dynasties, China was built into a huge empire, being extolled as ‘The Golden Times of Han and Tang Dynasties’, either Confucian Saint Kings or Daoist Nature Majesty being manifested in political administration and social prosperity. But in splitting and ethnic conflicting, Jin Dynasty Nature Majesty was disrupted for Daoists in that they had to be self-rewarded by turning inside for mental romance. Also, in the Song Dynasty, Confucian scholars had to meet with the mental challenge from an alien culture, i.e., Indian Buddhism, and by assimilating themselves to Buddhist epistemology and life philosophy, and also to Daoist cosmology, they achieved a reformed yet invigorating pattern of Confucianism, namely the Neo-Confucianism.

Anyhow, an optimistic movement at religious level began to form in both marginalized areas and among marginalized groups of people as opposed to pessimistically obscured Daoist political philosophy. In the transition from the Han to the Jin Dynasty, Zhang Ling initiated a denomination of Five Bushel Rice (*wudoumi dao*) in the southwestern areas and Zhang Jue founded a similar denomination of Grand Peace Dao (*taiping dao*) in central and eastern China. These denominations were first to appear as folk religions, being often involved with grassroots rebellions. Both denominations were the earliest forms of Daoist religion, convincing their adherents by incantations and ‘magic water.’ (*fushui*)⁸ In the Jin Dynasty, these earliest denominations were directed to formal organization with official supervision and systematic Daoist theory. In his work, Baopuzi Inner chapter (*baopuzi neipian*), Daoist master scholar Ge Hong systematically summarized all Daoist immortals (*shenxian*) and the arts of healing, divination, and horoscope in their practices, constructing a theory of alchemy and panacea combined with other magic arts popular among the grass roots. His innovative theory of Daoist religion achieved a proper balance between folk superstition and Confucian ethical doctrines, consolidating a pragmatic compromise between inner Daoist preservation and outer Confucian expansion. His pioneering integration between Daoist miraculous tricks and Confucian ethics paved the way for future

⁷ Feng Youlan, “On Metaphysical Romance,” in *The Complete Works of Three Pines Hall* (*sansongtang quanji*) (Zhengzhou: Henan People’s Press, 2000), Vol. 5, pp. 309–317.

⁸ According to this Daoist sect, the burned ashes from the mysterious writing by Daoist to fight against ghosts and spirits mixed in water for drinking would have healing powers for the sick. A Daoist preacher distributed this water among people during the outbreak of an epidemic disease and succeeded in attracting many followers who later joined his rebellion.

Daoist updated efforts conducted by following Daoist masters like Kou Qianzhi, Lu Xiujing, and Tao Hongjing. With their concerted efforts, Daoist doctrines, classics, disciplines, and organizations had assumed systematically new aspects before Daoism as an indigenous religion was widely acknowledged and accepted in chaotic Chinese societies.

One of the chief doctrine for religious Daoism is its philosophical explanation on ‘Longevity and Immortality’ (*changsheng jiushi*), which advocated two basic ways to attain the goal, namely taking panacea to consolidate one’s inner base and breathing in cosmic air to enhance life expectancy, or simply ‘manufacturing inner and outer pills for longevity’ (*lian neiwaidan*). Basing himself on the synthesis between the philosophies of Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi, the Immortal Theories of Ge Hong, Confucian Moral Cultivation and Buddhist Enlightenment, Tao Hongjing, a Daoist (or a Taoist): master scholar in the Southern Jin Dynasty, accomplished a new Daoist doctrine in “all natural beings diversified in the universe are produced by the intercourse of Yin and Yang, and one hundred schools of thought empty themselves in the triangle of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism.”⁹ Nevertheless, Daoist religion has an obvious amenable tendency toward Confucianism than to Buddhism which had been refuted as alien culture. What had been accepted as peer religion to Confucianism and Daoism by Chinese scholars and ordinary affiliates as well the Chinese Buddhists was Chinese Chan Buddhism, or Buddhism with Confucian and Daoist constituents.

For Buddhism in the Jin Dynasty, it also witnessed its own transition in scholarship and compromise with Confucian ethics. In the late years of the Han Dynasty, Indian Buddhism was introduced into China mainly as its specific religious epistemology called ‘*prajñā*’ (*boruo xue*) which was resisted by Chinese scholars and masses, and with the help of Chinese scholars another discipline of Indian Buddhism called ‘*nirvana*’ (*niepan xue*) gradually captured Chinese scholars as well as general adherents, catering to their ethical tradition and paving the way to the prosperity of Chinese Buddhism in the following dynasties, with its doctrines more specific of Confucian ‘Heart-Nature Theory’ and New Daoist Metaphysics than that of ‘*prajñā*’.

Yet, there were also heated debates and even occasional religious persecutions against Buddhism in the Jin Dynasty. These debates and religious persecutions among Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism are fragmented anecdotes instead of substantial xenophobia or exclusive conservatism. Regarding Buddhism as an alien culture, both Confucianism and Daoism were opposite to Buddhism in two aspects, one being on the enduring quality of soul and another being on religious respect to the monarch. Fan Zhen, a Confucian scholar, was the representative of Chinese scholars who maintained that the human soul would certainly perish when his physical body ceased to exist, but Hui Yuan, the representative of Chinese Buddhists insisted on the independent existence of the human soul even after his

⁹ Zhang Qizhi, *A History of Chinese Thoughts* (Lanzhou: Northwestern University Press, 1993), p. 214.

physical body decayed. On the issue of the devotion and respect for secular monarchs, Confucian scholars insisted on every member in society to be obliged to perform his family service or country duty as regulated by ethics and politics, but Buddhists argued, according to its doctrine, that both family and society were phenomenal delusions, their essential existence was only in the deep mountain temples and their sincere devotion was only rendered to sutras. The arguments between Confucian scholars and Chinese Buddhists ended up in a Feasible Compromise (*fangbian famen*): some Buddhists explained that Chinese monarchs were the Buddha Incarnate, so that showing respect for them is justified as they pay homage to Sakyamuni himself.

Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism in the Sui and Tang Dynasties (581–907 A.D.)

The Sui and Tang Dynasties were still the reigns basically guided by Confucian ideology. But officials, intellectuals, as well as masses had developed a stronger tendency toward Buddhism before a sense of worry was obviously felt among those committed Confucian scholars. They described the situation as “Confucianism lost its spiritual attractions, there was an irresistible brain drain towards Buddhism” (*rumen danbo, shoushi bu zhu rencai*)¹⁰ In their assessment, Confucian scholars saw less difference between them and Daoists in personal cultivation as distinguished in the method of being in society or in a larger natural world, but they saw drastic confrontations with Buddhists in both social ethics and mental enlightenment as well as Chinese culture and alien culture. Confucian master scholars in the Tang Dynasty like Fu Yi, Han Yu, and Li Ao were much concerned about these confrontations in their anti-Buddhist endeavors. At the same time, Daoism gained a rapid development in emulating Buddhism in its doctrines and regulations. Therefore, master scholars from religious Daoism, like Wang Xuanlan, Sima Chengzhen, Li Quan, and Tan Qiao, distinguished themselves in enriching Daoist theories either in an epistemology to systematize its doctrines or in its methodology to realize self-cultivation. Despite such confusing situations, Buddhism achieved its desirable successes in establishing its Chinese denominations in Tian Tai, Hua Yan, and Zen Sects. Even the Pure Land Sect, which was only a negligible sect in Indian Buddhism, managed to develop into a popular sect in China after adapting itself to Chinese indigenous folk faith.

As the first civilized empire in China in the world perspective, the Tang emperors adopted a harmonious national policy to embrace foreign culture and to compromise non-official doctrines, declaring in the capacity of ‘World Emperor’

¹⁰ Zhang Dainian, *The Complete Works of Zhang Dainian* (Shijiazhuang: Hebei People’s Press, 1996), Vol. 7, p. 67.

(*tian kehan*) that all ethnic people are equal members of one big family.¹¹ For domestic governance, the Tang Emperors issued principles and policies to treat fairly either Confucian, Daoist, or Buddhist affiliates, and for international policy, the Tang central government encouraged foreign trade, especially business from central and western Asian countries. Not only were many foreign residences built in the capital of the Tang Empire, but also some foreigners or ethnic warriors were named military generals or governors for western bordering provinces. As an equal and peaceful way to enter governments at different levels, Emperor Li Shimin (*tangtaizong*) summoned Yan Shigu, a presumed master Confucian scholar, to rectify and reedit Confucian Five Classics to purge off errors from popularly confused Confucian classics; the emperor also ordered Kong Yingda, Confucius' grandson of the 32nd generation, to compile *The Correct Doctrines of Five Classics* (*wujing zhengyi*) as the authoritative resource for national service examinations. After being used as textbooks for 12 years, *The Correct Doctrines of Five Classics* were officially decreed by Emperor Li Shimin to be the authoritative texts, and they were exclusively applied as the criteria for national service examinations to the Song Dynasty when Annotations to the Four Books by Zhu Xi were added to its text body, which were ever since the formal and authoritative academic sources for national service examinations for another 1,300 years before being banished in the 1911 Revolution. If China had been impressive as a Confucian country compared to what we call Western nation Christian countries, it was largely due to the Confucian classics ordained as texts for national civil service examinations, laying ethical foundations for governmental policy despite it being frequently observed for lip-service by many despotic emperors.

Differing itself from being politically advocated in the beginning of the Han Dynasty to offset the sufferings inflicted on Chinese society by Legalist utilitarianism in the short-fated Qin Dynasty, Daoist thought was highly appreciated by the ruling Li clans in the Tang Dynasty. This religious trend of Daoism was revived and encouraged by an anthropological concurrence that the Daoist pioneer philosopher, whose family name is Li, joined the ruling Li family in the Tang Dynasty in the hope that emperors of the Li family originated in a noble heritage beginning from the Zhou Dynasty, the longest sustained dynasty in Chinese history (1046–256 B.C.). In fact the Li family came to power just as local warlords in the social chaos among warlords conflicts in the late years of the Sui Dynasty (581–618 A.D.), another very short-lived reign next to the Qin. In order to win the obedience of Chinese masses among whom religious Daoism was prevalent and to reinforce its own political legitimacy, the ruling Li family glorified Li Er, his philosopher name being Lao Zi, in the entitlement of 'Ancestor Saint Meta-Emperor' (*dashengzu xuanyuanhuangdi*), decreeing Daoist religion as the most favored among the three religions, namely Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism

¹¹ "World Emperor" (*tian kehan*), a dignified title given by ethnic tribes who used to attack Chinese central authority for many centuries, meaning they will respect the Tang Emperor as the chieftain governing all under the heaven.

and adding *Dao De Jing* (also pronounced as *Tao Te Ching*) or *The Works of Lao Zi* as official subject equal to Confucian classics in the civil service examinations. From the Han to the Jin and then to the Tang Dynasties, we should notice the subtle change of the titles on Daoism: Yellow Emperor and Lao Zi (*Huang Lao*) as political substitute for Legalist utilitarianism in the Han, Zhuang Zi, and Lao Zi (*zhuang lao*) as self-realization philosophy against Buddhist epistemological enlightenment in the Jin, and finally The Supreme Lao Zi (*taishang laojun*) as the absolute faith for Li-clan emperors in its political and religious legitimacy in the Tang. The supremacy of religious Daoism also had vestige of superstition on religious miracles, to witness which the ruling Li family had maintained an addiction to taking panacea or ‘the Immortal Pills’ (*xiandan*) and resulted in the poisoned deaths of six Li clan emperors.

The emperor family in the Tang Dynasty also had some alien blood than pure blood of Han people, the overwhelming majority of Chinese people, this alien blood mainly from ethnic people in China’s neighboring ‘western territories’ (*xiyu*) where many early Indian Buddhist monks traveled and resided. This clue was joined by Buddhist adaptation and assimilation in China in fermenting the surge of Buddhism in the Tang Dynasty. In Indian Buddhist system, the concepts like ‘Tathata’ (*zhenru* or metaphysical entity, i.e. like suchness), ‘Buddha Nature’ (*foxing*, or universal entity, like essential quality of beings) and ‘Dharma’ (*faxing*, or universal law) did exist in Indian Mahayana Buddhism, but they did not maintain as the most attractive ones among Chinese Buddhist affiliates or scholars. Yet once introduced into Chinese faith system, they were maneuvered to have realized a creative transformation with reference to Confucian ‘Heart-Nature Theory’ and New Daoist ‘Metaphysics’ in ‘Being and Nonbeing’ (*youwu zhi bian*). And such transformation was solidified to be the ‘Onto’ to deduce series of denominations of Chinese style. For instance, both *Buddhāvataṃsakamahāvāipulyasūtra* (*hua yan jing*) and *Saddharmapundarikasūtra* (*fahuajing*) had very limited influence as some of the many sutras in Mahayana Yogācāra of Indian Buddhism, but became doctrinal classics for Hua Yan Denomination (*huayan zong*) and Tian Tai Denomination (*tiantai zong*) respectively. In the process of this transformation both Buddhist, Confucian, and Daoist kernel concepts had been reciprocally interlaced as between Buddhist ‘Tathata’ and Daoist ‘Metaphysical Reason’ (*xuanli*), Buddhist ‘Dharma Nature’ (*faxing*) and Confucian ‘Nature Mandate’ (*xingming*), and Buddhist ‘Buddha Nature’ (*foxing*) and Confucian ‘Moral Spontaneity’ (*liangzhi*).

Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism in the Song and Yuan Dynasties (960–1368 A.D.)

On the faith triangle established on basically harmonious compromise and tolerance, Confucianism attained a new height in the Song and Yuan Dynasties, being academically known as Neo-Confucianism. Such academic height witnessed the

three new renovated branches of traditional Confucianism, namely Zhu Xi with his ‘Rationalist Scholarship’ (*lixue*), Lu Jiuyuan with his ‘Intuitionist Scholarship’ (*xinxue*) and Zhang Zai with his Cosmic Air Scholarship (*qixue*). Among the three branches constituting Neo-Confucianism, Zhu Xi’s ‘Rationalist Scholarship’, sometimes also prefixed with Cheng Yi, the younger of the Cheng Brothers, as ‘Cheng Zhu Rationalist Scholarship’ (*chengzhu lixue*), was the updated Confucian ‘Humaneness Scholarship’ (*renxue*) by inheriting its rationalist tradition and being overhauled in the process of ‘Neo-Daoist Conceptualization’ (*bianming xili*) as well as Buddhist epistemological *prajñā*. ‘Intuitionist Scholarship’, more frequently added with suffix Wang Yangming in the Ming Dynasty as ‘Lu Wang Intuitionist Scholarship’ (*luwang xinxue*) or simply as ‘Heart-Nature Scholarship’, invigorated ‘heart-nature’ doctrine initiated by Mencius in the Pre-Qin Period or Period Before the Qin Dynasty (221–206 B.C.) and cherished the independence and subjectivity in ‘Buddha Nature in Enlightenment’ (*foxing benjue*) and ‘Diamond Quality in Determination’ (*gangmeng jingjin*), and this Confucian branch has been widely admired as the mainstay advocating personal integrity, mental emancipation, and social revolution. ‘The Cosmic Air Scholarship’ may also be traced to Xun Zi in the Pre-Qin Period succeeded by Wang Chong in the Han Dynasty before Zhang Zai promoted it to an established scholarship, which theorized the ancient observation on the constituents of cosmos, epitomized by Zhuang Zi in the famous statement “The Cosmos is diversified in air.” (*tongtianxia yi qi er*)¹² Many western scholars have been skeptical about science concepts in Confucianism for being impressed by its ethical facets, but if they managed to read the observations by Zhuang Zai in his “Whatever is physically observable is being, whatever is being is phenomenon, and whatever is phenomenon is the air” (*fankezhuang jie you ye, fanyou jie xiang ye, fanxiang jie qi ye*)¹³ His observation in terms of Cosmic Air definitely bore the science merits in Confucian tradition convincingly comparable to Aristotle, the father of science in the west, in his ‘absolute substance’ as cosmos particle. For Buddhist obstinacy in ‘The Four Cosmos Elements Are Empty by Onto’ (*sidajiekong*), I can see nothing substantially affecting Zhang Zai’s cosmology from Buddhist tradition. Nevertheless, the positive influence on Confucian Rationalist Scholarship and Intuitionist Scholarship from Neo-Daoist ‘Conceptualization’ and Zen or Chan Buddhist ‘Witnessing Nature by Heart Enlightenment’ (*Ming Xin Jian Xing*), which resulted in the popular impression in the Song Dynasty with the slang ‘Zhu Xi is a sort of Daoist while Lu Jiuyuan a Chan Buddhist’ (*zhuzi dao, luzi chan*).

The revival of Confucianism in the Song Dynasty, which was epitomized in Zhu Xi’s Annotations to The Four Books (*sishu jizhu*) and authorized officially as texts for civil service examinations together with Five Classics, known as the ‘Four Books and Five Classics’ (*sishu wujing*), was also accompanied by the

¹² Sense in Travel of Immensity, *The Works of Zhuang Zi* (*zhi bei you, zhuangzi*).

¹³ Zhang Zai, “Divine Evolution, Cosmological Enlightenment (*zheng meng, qian cheng*)”, in *The Works of Zhang Zai* (*zhangzai ji*) (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 1978), p. 63.

Buddhist and Daoist enthusiasm in compiling their own corresponding classics. The first ‘Chinese Encyclopedia of Buddhist Sutras of the Song Dynasty’ (*beisong guanban dazangjing*) was completed under the auspices of the government. Encouraged and positively involved in religious cultivation, many Buddhist master monks claimed the success of following both ways of ‘Zen or Chan Enlightenment’ (*dunwu*) and ‘Reciting Amitābha’ (*nianfo*), and even Chan Buddhist monks who were then the dominant denomination favored the ‘Double Practice of Chan and Pure Land’ (*chanjing shuangxiu*), making the integration between Chan and Pure Land Buddhism the prevailing sect in Buddhist theory and practice. Amitābhasūtra was the main sutra for Pure Land Denomination which claims the ‘Pure Land’ already residing at man’s heart where there are evergreen flowers, never-dying grasses, ageless life blessing, and innumerable light. Such a ‘Pure Land’ was the paradise attainable to general adherents if they reciting Amitābha by simply finger-felt counting the pray beads as many times as possible a day and ‘a welcoming Buddha’ would also appear to lead one into the Pure Land if he is religiously devoted to this Buddha.

Religious Daoism also advanced in its establishment of doctrinal classics and ideological influence especially in the leading clique of the Mongolians who conquered China and established Mongolian dominated government in Chinese society. In emulating the compiling and printing Buddhist Sutras in the Song Dynasty, Daoist scholars accomplished a huge compilation named The Unified Treasure of Daoist Collections (*baowen tonglu*) and Treasure Classics From All Daoist Temples in The Song (*dasong kaigong baozang*). The anecdote of inspiring interview between Daoist Master Scholar Qiu Chuji and Genghis Khan brought Chinese blessed peace than brutal conquest as the Mongolian military harassment on European countries negatively reputed as ‘Yellow Peril’. Enticed by Chinese imperial tradition to decree for Daoist ‘Immortal Pills’, the First Emperor of the Yuan Dynasty Genghis Khan enquired after Qiu Chuji for being immortal and social rule, Qiu’s answer was recorded in the official history as:

“In his western expedition, Genghis Khan was so committed to brutal conquest and military occupation. So the Daoist Master Qiu Chuji took every opportunity to convince him that the unification of the world would not be naturally realized by addictive massacre. When being enquired about how to rule, the Daoist Master responded that the rule of the world must be justified in worship for heaven and in love for people. When asked about the secret way of long life and clear vision, Qiu told the Khan that nothing secret but pure mind with few desires. His Majesty Genghis Khan was convinced with exclamation ‘His honorable Immortal Master has been dispatched from heaven, just to enlighten me in my undertaking’.... There was another time when His Majesty was puzzled by a thunder, Master Qiu interpreted it to him: ‘Thunder was the embodiment of heavenly majesty. No graver crime ever committed by human than the abuse of filial piety, which is identical to the abuse of heavenly mandate and thus heaven will thunder in his infuriated warning. Now I got impressed about the increase of such abuses, Your Majesty should avail this heavenly omen to remedy the abuses.’ His Majesty whole heartedly took Qiu’s advice.”

And the anecdote goes on as:

“In the winter of a year, His Majesty went on hunting on a large scale at the Eastern Mountain. But his horse stumbled and fell. At this His Honorable Immortal Master persuade: ‘The Dao of heaven is revealed in preserving lives. Your Majesty is already advanced in age, so frequent hunting might not be fit for your health.’ His Majesty hence abandoned hunting for quite some time.”¹⁴ Apart from the political persuasions from both Daoist and Confucian perspectives of Qiu Chuji, some senior advisors to the Yuan Dynasty Emperors like Wansong Xingxiu and his disciple Yeli Chucui also engaged in spreading and advocating the triangle of faiths, the motto being popular among them as ‘to rule the country by Confucianism, and to cultivate one’s heart by Buddhism.’ (*yiru zhiguo, yifo zhixin*) So it was amazing to see the religiously honorable compromise among its stratified adherents in the Yuan, being Daoist and Confucian affiliated among senior clique members while being Buddhist or Lama affiliated at grassroots.

Basically, even it were still the conventional Chinese society dominated by alien ethnic Mongolians, Confucianism was consistently prevailing among Mongolian intellectuals and administering staff in the established form of Neo-Confucianism. Since ‘Confucian Daoist Scholarship’ (*daoxue zhuan*) was adopted to the History of the Song Dynasty, the History of the Yuan Dynasty was also in the follow-up with ‘Confucian Scholarship’ (*ruxue zhuan*) to distinguish itself from the traditional phrase ‘Confucian Biographies’ (*rulin zhuan*). And even under the reign of Humaneness Emperor of the Yuan (Ren Zong, 1312–1321 A.D.), an imperial decree was legitimately issued that all people in four orders (Mongolians, People with different-colored eyes, Han Chinese, and Southern Chinese) were equal before the civil service examinations based on Four Books and Five Classics of Confucianism. Such peculiar social equality was established in the Han Dynasty by way of open selection under the principle Confucian ethics and in the Tang Dynasty by way of open examinations with Confucian Five Classics. In the Yuan Dynasty, Confucian Four Books and Five Classics were consistently acknowledged as the official orthodoxies more than their superficially claimed official documents, in this trendy yet religiously designed scheme, the Alien Mongolian elite must have acquiesced in being the same people of Chinese faith triangle.

The Faith Triangle in the Ming and Qing Dynasties (1368–1911 A.D.)

There are many similarities between the Song and the Yuan, and the Ming and the Qing in political constitution and cultural feature, i.e. the succession between the Han people and the Mandarin people in the former, as comparable to the Han

¹⁴ Song Lian, “The Category of Daoist and Buddhist Biographies in The History of the Yuan Dynasty (*yuanshi, shi lao zhuan*),” in *The Twenty-Four Histories* (Version of Simplified Chinese) (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 2000) Vol. 202, p. 3026.

people and the Mongolian people in the latter. What we can say for certainty in the Ming and Qing Dynasties is that the Heart-Nature Denomination of Neo-Confucianism achieved an intellectual peak in Wang Yangming and the leading groups and the majority of its Mandarin aristocracy were gradually converted into Chinese of Confucian, Daoist and Buddhist faiths, witnessing the political, administrative, cultural and spiritual continuance of Chinese nation.

In the reign of the Ming Dynasty, three sets of complete works were authorized as imperial documents for civil service examinations, i.e. the Complete Works of the Five Classics (*wujing daquan*), the Complete Works of the Four Books (*sishu daquan*), and the Complete Works of Nature-Reason (*xingli daquan*). These documents, as seen in their titles, based themselves on the conceptual system of Confucian 'Nature-Mandate-Heaven-Reason' (*xingming tianli*) in constructing a stereotyped pattern sourced from both religious doctrines of Confucian interpretation popular in the Song Dynasty and the rigid genre of metrically versed essays ostentatiously sought after in the Han Dynasty, leaving the Neo-Confucianism initiated by Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi in the dogmatized decline. To rescue the Confucian decline in the Ming Dynasty, Wang Yangming assumed a new aspect of Intuitionist Scholarship immediately associated with Lu Jiuyuan in the Song Dynasty, the scholarship habitually termed as 'Lu and Wang Heart Scholarship' (*luwang xinxue*), his fruitful ambition being reinforced by the subjectivity in Chan Buddhist doctrine of 'Witnessing Nature by Heart Enlightenment' (*mingxin jianxing*) and Mencius 'Heart-Nature Theory' as well as Daoist 'Metaphysics' (*xuanxue*). The introduction of independence and originality initiated by human heart into the dogmatized Confucian Scholarship fortified Wang Yangming in his academic and administrative endeavors which compensated the imperial brutal dictatorship in the Ming Dynasty with Confucian dignity of intellectual integrity. The symbol of Confucian intellectual integrity advocated by Wang Yangming was later on made majestically glaring when Confucian scholars campaigned against imperial dictatorship, witnessing their moral courage and social commitment: "A school equally conducted by both teachers and students (*yitang shiyong*), A contrast between cold wind and hot blood (*lengfeng rexue*), and A duty to purge the cosmos of all dirt. (*xidi qiankun*)"¹⁵ With this feature of subjective independence and cosmically social commitments, Wang Yangming and his Heart-Nature Scholarship was succeeded as forceful arguments for those revolutionary Confucian intellectuals against Mandarin invasions into China and its enlightenment legacies were also much appreciated when being introduced into Korea and Japan, the Confucian scholars there being proudly extolled as enlightened social celebrities and elites.

When the ethnic Mandarins entered China in the establishment of the Qing Dynasty, the theme of 'Debate between Chinese and Barbarians' (*xiayi zhi bian*)

¹⁵ Huang Zongxi, "Part II, Biographies of Dong Lin (*dong lin xue an yi*)," in *Biographies of Confucian Scholars in the Ming Dynasty* (*mingru xue an*) reversed edition, (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 1985), Vol. 2, chapt. 58, p. 1375.

immediately attract the attention of the society. Many Confucian and Daoist scholars reconciled themselves with the smooth conversions of ‘ethnic barbarians’ into Chinese culture consisting mainly of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism, and were eventually recruited as the senior bureaucrat of the ethnic Mandarin power. To name two of the most celebrated Confucian bureaucratic scholars, we have Zhang Zhidong for his initiative role in the Westernization Movement (*yangwu yundong*) and his catchphrase ‘Taking Chinese learning as metaphysical onto and western learning physical applications’ (*zhongxue weiti, xixue weiyong*) as official conclusion for modernization endeavors in the nineteenth century and Zeng Guofan for his prestige as the last model of Confucian ‘Saint of Three Accomplished Merits’ (*sanli wanren*), meaning the ordered priority of being moral, being active, and being knowledgeable, who was invariably referred to for his military crushing the Taiping Uprising (*taiping tianguo qiyi*, 1851–1864 A.D.) and his academic merit in collecting and compiling the scattered manuscripts of Wang Fuzhi, the most voluminous author with penetrating thoughts mainly on Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism.

Traditionally only Daoists and Buddhists would have their residence built in the deep mountains to speculate or mediate in the intimacy of natural solitude and mental peace. For Buddhists we have popular saying, “Eminent mountains are basically occupied by Buddhist monks” (*tianxia mingshan sengzhanduo*). And for Daoist Monks there would be main Daoist temple named ‘Hall of Three Purities’ (*sanqinggong*), meaning threefold purities in metaphysical heaven, metaphysical earth, and metaphysical human to consummate the holy Dao. Yet in the beginning of the Qing Dynasty, Wang Fuzhi, possibly the most voluminous writer of Confucian scholars, went into deep mountains at Hengyang in Central China (*zhongyue hengshan*) for consecutive 40 years, having accomplished around 100 types of work in 400 volumes covering all disciplines between ‘heaven and human’. To locate his specific residence in the deep mountains scholars find the name ‘boat-shaped mountain’, so he was habitually esteemed as ‘Mr. Boat Mountain’ (*chuanshan xiansheng*), but we may also ascribe him as ‘Chinese Aristotle’. Committing himself to the creative transformation for all ancient Chinese classics in the motto ‘I am obliged by Confucian Six Classics to cultivate a new horizon’ (*liujing zewo kaishengmian*), Wang Fuzhi or ‘Mr. Boat Mountain’ had accomplished a creative summary for Confucianism in its social ethics, civil faith, and political philosophy, for Daoism in its cosmology, nature-oriented individual, and social philosophy, and for Buddhism in its deductive epistemology and nirvana pursuit. His gorgeous academics has been extolling as the ‘Holy Vocation in the Deep Mountains’ (*mingshan shiye*), meaning ‘the concealment of independent and original thoughts in the deep mountains is bound to enlighten the future generations’ (*cangzhu mingshan, chuanzhu houren*). By being lost in his admiration, we are optimistically assured that Chinese faith triangle is harmonious and reciprocal in their spiritual and social relations.

In the Qing Dynasty, Confucian scholars had been frustrating with the austere facts that Chinese suffered bloody conquests and suppression by the Mandarin barbarians in its early years as well as disgraced and harassed by ‘western foreign

ghosts' (*xiyang guizi*) in its social breakdown after the two Sino-British Opium Wars (1840–1842, 1856–1860) before they realized Buddhism might be a better spiritual asylum to seek in this start-to-end disappointment. Many celebrated intellectuals either from Confucian, Daoist and Buddhist traditions turned to intermediate solace for their conflicting souls, a buffer zone between imperial court and deep-mountain temples, and they eventually became 'Grhapati' (*jushi*), amateur Buddhist monk at home. Chinese readers might not be surprised to associate these famous Confucian scholars with Grhapati, such as Gong Zizhen, Wei Yuan, Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, Tan Sitong and Zhang Taiyan. Among those Grhapati, Yang Wenhui (1837–1911) merits special introduction and attention in the late Qing Dynasty. Disappointed at both the decline of the occupational Buddhist denominations in the deep mountains and the deteriorating diplomacy of Chinese government, he believed that China could only be rescued from these tragedies by two ways: to promote business and trade, and to conduct missionary work. To combine these two he was determined to initiate a mission of 'Buddhists at home' to enlighten every Chinese in their ever worsening situations. According to his traveling and observation in modern European countries, Yang convinced that those advanced societies and people of well-being there were Buddhists in their previous lives, therefore if every Chinese were turned into Buddhist affiliate this life, there would be society and people as advanced and as well-being as what there had been in Europe. With such conviction and vision, he devoted all he had for the missionary work of Buddhists at home. He established Nanjing Buddhist Sutra Press (*nanjing kejingchu*) and the Buddhist Association to disseminate Buddhism by socially distributing sutras and conducting lectures open for society. And this 'Buddhist at home' was undertaken with unexceptionally missionary zeal before his death in 1911. With the political and social bankruptcy of China and the Christian expansion in the dying periods of the Qing Dynasty, Buddhism was still worshipped and practiced among Chinese intellectuals and masses rather than being extinguished in many similar situations in the world, there must be much to Yang's credit. He thus fully merits the title 'Father of Modern Buddhist Revival'.

Daoism remained comparatively reserved in this special phase of transition on the threshold of modern history. But one Daoist scholar Chen Yingning had all credentials for being the helmsman to steer traditional Daoism from being immortal as faith to being immortal as scholarship. It is inspiring to sense the religious and philosophical connotations from his name, "Ying" (touching) meaning being physically involved with empirical world and "ning" (untouched essence) meaning metaphysical serenity. His name suggested the religious and philosophical transcendence and his mission was exhibited in his distinction between traditional long life maintenance and scholarship about being immortal. What he actively engaged himself with was the scholarship about being immortal which he believed to be mainly concerning about inner enhancement of cosmic consciousness rather than outer physical durability. Such immortal scholarship outstripped the immediate affiliations to empirical world including biological being, family structure, country organizations, natural beings, physical illusions,

etc. in reversing one's speculation inward to intuitional simplicity at heart. And it seemed to him the transcendent intimacy felt at heart would coincide a human body with the eternity of nature. What had been assumed by traditional Daoists as cosmic elements of Quintessence (*jing*), Air (*qi*) and Change (*shen*) were accordingly transmuted to intuitional exercise of mental concentration.

Some Comments

In the description of Chinese faith triangle in the making of its enduring history, the intellectual appeal to western minds might be that there were no social conflicts antagonistic to each other to a deadlock that civil wars proved to be the last resort. Between these three branches of Chinese faith system honorable compromise and honest integration nursed a darling harbor for Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism to treat each other as loving partners and stakeholders. With compromise and integration Confucian Zhu Xi and Daoist Qiu Chuji can be appreciated equally and constructively as a Daoist-tinged Confucian and a Confucian-tinged Daoist, freeing readers of horrible memories on lens-grinder Spinoza and Bruno burnt at the stake. And peculiarly in the Golden Times of Han and Tang Dynasties, we are not startled in the smallest possible way to find Confucian scholar joined by Daoist scholar in giving advice for Han's imperial politics and to see harmony in Tang's imperial court when Daoist, Confucian, and Buddhist master scholars simultaneously served as venerable consultants for national stability, security and prosperity. Although we have attributed the feature of administration in society to Confucians, of refusal to social attractions to Daoists and of freedom from social confinement to Buddhists, we still see the attributes amusingly exhibited on the opposite adherents. To read the much cited lines by a poet in the Jin Dynasty in "A poor hermit only manages to hide in the mountains, but a great hermit survives in the competing society" (*xiaoyin yinlingsou, dayin yinchaoshi*),¹⁶ one would never miss the beauty of principled adaption among this faith triangle. Since they all originated from the human speculations on cosmic dynamics, what underlies this ever-animated world is what justifies their respective convictions. The compromise and integration may also be introduced to interpret their reflections on the mega relation between heaven and human, abbreviated in these intelligent phrases to be accounted for 'the integration between heaven and human' (*tianren heyi*) in Confucianism, 'human modeling himself after the earth, the earth after the heaven, the heaven after Dao, and Dao after itself' (*renfadi, difatian, tianfadao, daofaziran*) in Daoism, and 'The Thousand World of Three Kinds Conceptualized in One Idea' (*yinian sanqian*) in Buddhism. These phrases do merit particular

¹⁶ Wang Kangju, "Against Invited Hermit (*fan zhao yinshi*)," in *The Complete Translation to Selected Essays* (*wenxuan quanyi*), edit. by Xiao Tong in the Jin, trans. by Zhang Qicheng, Xu Da (Guiyang: Guizhou People's Press, 1994), Vol. 2, p. 1298.

recommendation in comparing with ‘Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s’ in the western faith tradition.

Although in the structure of the faith triangle we achieved a balanced assessment on the relations among Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism and between their religious and philosophical attributes, in the evaluation of Chinese scholarship Buddhism has been often underestimated or even ignored due to its being alien to Chinese orthodox culture as well as its being religious in modern defiance against God. Quite often modern Chinese scholars associate authentic scholarship only to the Han Dynasty as Han Scholarship (*hanxue*) and to the Song Dynasty as Song Scholarship (*songxue*) which focused mainly on Confucian tradition and subordinate Daoist tradition. In the mindset of the ‘Debate between Chinese and Barbarians’ (*xiayi zhi bian*), foreigners were born barbarians, so Indian Buddhism was inferior to Chinese scholarship despite its being more sophisticated in epistemology and teleology in attracting more Chinese affiliates in the Tang Dynasty. Also, in the modern animosity against the religious Dark Age in Europe and in a superstition toward the Enlightened Modern Europe, there appeared an influential mentality in modern China that Buddhism as an alien religion would not have been anything positive to China in these dimensions. By such mentality Han Scholarship is advanced in philology and textual criticism or simply ‘Instrumental Learning’ (*xiaoxue*) and Song Scholarship in philosophy and humanity or simply ‘Moral Learning’ (*daxue*). The exclusive distinction on Han and Song Scholarships is definitely deficient to explain the eclipse of Han Scholarship in its later years and the cause of the emergence of Song Scholarship, which could not be convincingly interpreted if Buddhism had been not introduced with its peculiar academic feats in epistemology (*prajñā*) and teleology (*nirvana*). Therefore, in the comprehensive and disinterested depiction adopted hereabouts in the faith triangle readers of Chinese tradition would be safeguarded from being short of vision and large of illusion.

Before the modern distinction between philosophy and religion was introduced into China as a smart approach and method to evaluate Chinese spiritual tradition, Chinese scholars had not been conscious about Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism in either of these Aristotelian disciplines. Like the modern Buddhist scholar would tell, Buddhism can be both philosophy and religion, or none of them, since they outline that defining philosophy and religion can be deconstructed in Buddhist ‘Nature-Emptiness-in-Cosmological Interdependence’ (*yuanqi xing-kong*). Such academic confusion also prevails in western scholarship concerning Buddhism. This background is especially valid to approach Daoism in the Chinese intellectual and historical contexts, since Daoism has been diversifying in terms of either Lao Zhuang, Huang Lao, Zhuang Lao, or just Lao Zi (*lao-zi*). I would appreciate the chronicle depiction about Daoism in agreement with the cultural context. Therefore, before the Qin Dynasty especially in the Spring and Autumn Period, Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi should be accepted as originator peers to Confucius and Mencius in their natural philosophy. In the early years of the Han Dynasty a legendary hero, Huang Di, was added before Lao Zi in constructing a political philosophy to justify the political shift from Qin’s Legalist politics to Han’s more

inclusive one comprising both Confucianism and Legalism; thus Huang Lao scholarship should be regarded as the political ideology in building a more open and democratic society in Chinese history, for instance the official talentscout system from all social strata was first initiated in the Daoist spirit of natural rights. And then the transformation from Huang Lao to religious Daoism in which only Lao Zi was worshipped as the exclusively Cosmic Creator, combined with some ancient witchcraft of being immortal. Finally, Zhang Zi was added to Lao Zi in constructing Daoist humanistic metaphysics or Daoist Metaphysics where in many cases Zhuang Zi was prioritized in its academics. These Daoist academic feats were amusingly commented upon by later Buddhist scholars as “Conventional impression would tell that Scholar Guo Xiang contributed to the annotation of Zhuang Zi, but a second thought would reveal that Zhuang Zi still reserves much metaphysical message than Guo Xiang could annotate.”¹⁷ The philosophy of Zhuang Zi in the Wei and Jin Dynasties became a sort of humanistic metaphysics in the form of essays of Neo-Daoists, but its original merits in the form of poetic style would not be aesthetically exposed to its essayist readers. When we refer metaphysics to humanistic evaluation, we might be reminded of Kantian conception of ‘metaphysics is the queen of sciences’ and of Moritz Schlick’s comment that “metaphysics is an art like lyrical poetry”, but none of them had been as smart as Zhuang Zi in his humanistic transforming metaphysics into romantic aesthetics in ancient China.

For the introduction and acceptance of Indian Buddhism into Chinese society, I should also attribute its success to its convictions in universal Buddha nature and self-enlightened salvation peculiar to Buddhist intellectual revolution against stereotyped caste in Hinduism, which had also been destructive construction to stagnant aristocracy dilapidated in the late years of the Han Dynasty and ostentatious scholarship among intellectuals in the chaotic Wei and Jin Dynasties. In a way Indian Buddhism could be precisely illustrated in Chinese intellectual and social contexts much the same as the arts and literature in antiquity serving as catalysts in the European Renaissance. The Great Mercy and Compassion (*dacibei*) and omnipresent Dharma in Indian Buddhism were the religious gospel to Chinese who transformed them into their own beliefs as Chan denomination for illiterate Han people, as tantric denomination in Chinese Tibetan areas and as Lama denomination in the grassroots Yuan Mongolians. So either perceived from history or social functions, Buddhism has been integrated as part of Chinese tradition, and we cannot afford to ignore its importance in an organic body of Chinese scholarship, let alone its conspicuous facets in epistemology and teleology which have been indispensable in reviving Confucianism and Daoism as well as uniting Chinese nation ethnically and socially.

The faith triangle also serves as the cultural identity for Chinese society to cooperate with the new ruling ethnic people, typically in the Yuan and Qing

¹⁷ See Feng Youlan, *The Complete Works of Three Pines Hall* (*sansongtang quanji*) (Zhengzhou: Henan People’s Press, 2000), Vol. 5, p. 234.

Dynasties, and to adjust its spiritual acceptance and social confirmation, typically in the Tang Dynasty and the Taiping Uprising in the Qing Dynasty. When alien Buddhism was gaining momentum in the Tang Dynasty, renowned Confucian scholars like Fu Yi and Han Yu reserved no efforts in resisting it from being preached in central China and Han Yu even risked his life to persuade Emperor Tai Zong to ban Buddhism completely which resulted in his miserable exile. Fortunately, Buddhism was able to survive and prosper in the midst of Confucian resistance with pious adherence from basically illiterate civilians. But the alien faith mixed with the Catholic of the Taiping rebels was firmly refuted as evil gospels by those committed Confucian politicians who led their own local forces to defeat their own Han rebels with evil religion and to defend the ruling Mandarin barbarians who had converted themselves into Confucians, Daoists, and Buddhists. This contrast in the Tang and Qing Dynasties tells the obstinate history of religious transplant and the built-in stability of these three branches of the faith system in Chinese cultural identity. With this knowledge of the Chinese faith system in mind, one may be wiser to examine the current situations in China where official Marxism as ideology, market economy with western Christian heritage as social dynamics, and indigenous Chinese spirituality as national entity coincide and coexist.

Chapter 2

The Basic Spirit of Chinese Culture and National Faith

Introduction

The Chinese national faith system is basically expressed in the unity of three traditions, that is, Confucianism, Daoism, and Chinese Buddhism. In this unity, Confucianism constitutes the mainstay, complemented by the other two. Confucianism and Daoism are indigenous to China and Chinese Buddhism was introduced from India in its early days by adapting itself to Confucianism and Daoism or Taoism. The key concept of these three traditions is not a personal God, but a sacred relation between Human and Heaven, which is equivalent to the universe. In this faith frame, Heaven symbolizes nature, human ancestor, origin of human morality, and lawgiver to nature and society, and ultimate realization of human being. In this symbolization, we have a clear-cut faith of Integration between Heaven and Human (*tianren heyi*). The relation between Heaven and Human is not one between the Creator and his creatures, but one between ancestry and their offspring, termed as life-community. In this sense, the subject of Chinese faith is both heaven and human. When Chinese leaders follow the principle of life-community, Chinese civilians will respect them as the sons of Heaven, but when they violate the principle of life-community, Chinese civilians will ostracize them in the name of sacred Heaven. The principle of life-community is that of universal love, illuminated from loving family members to other members of the universe. This has been the mainstay of the Chinese traditional faith system.

Relation between Heaven and Human

The Chinese national faith has been based on the *Integration among Confucianism, Daoism, and Chinese Buddhism (sanjiaoheyi)*. This national faith has witnessed Chinese as a unified nation in her strenuous survival and development to the status quo in which Confucianism is seen as the mainstay, while Daoism and Chinese Buddhism are branches of the Chinese national faith system. All the three traditions

in the Chinese faith system do not hold a personal God as their key sacred concept sustaining their belief, respectively. Instead, they all propose that the relation between Heaven as nature and Man as naturally evolved beings is invariably sacred defying all other secular relations. This sacred relation is traditionally termed as the Integration between Heaven and Human (*tianren heyi*). According to Confucian faith, Heaven is the origin of all lives in the universe, constituting the moral archetype of human morality and the ultimate realization of human lives. Hence, Heaven has been bestowed by Confucian, Daoist, and Chinese Buddhist thinkers with supreme holy features, being different only in different descriptive terms as in Confucian Heaven, Daoist *Dao or Tao*, and Buddhist *Buddha nature*. Since, Heaven is believed as the origin of all lives and sources of all moral values, its extension is cherished as Fate, Mandate, Value, Nature, Reason, Lawgiver, and Savior. All in all, whatever values God has in the western tradition has all been bestowed to the Chinese Heaven; besides, it has some features peculiar only to itself, that is, the intimacy and identification between heaven and human. With this religious experience, Chinese scholars have translated Catholicism as Heaven—Master Religion (*tianzhujiao*) in Chinese. Yet, if we believe these peculiar features to be of faith and religiosity, it must be universal in its quality. Then could it be self-contradictory between being peculiar and universal? Definitely not. In the perspective of China's geographic situation, what we know of China now was historically thought as the whole universe, being acknowledged as under the heaven where the northern tip was separated by great desert, southern tip by tropical forest, western tip by high mountains, and eastern tip by the Eastern China Sea. This naturally protected area was thought to be a holy blessed universe under heaven, and all values generated from this holy geographic situation were thought to be equally universal despite the fact that they are now being realized only to be peculiar to Chinese nation. Therefore, we regard these faith values peculiar to the Chinese as universal in terms of Chinese motivation and sentiment.

That is why all religious values of Chinese faith are thought to be universally correct. In the motivation and sentiment of ancient Chinese scholars, all the values of their faith were generated to be harmonious with what Heaven ordered absolutely for all beings under heaven, so these values were believed to be universally sacred. Such a geographic and religious tradition gives the Chinese all the reason and feeling to believe what *The Book of Poetry*, one of the earliest Confucian *Five Classics*, describes as “All beings under the heaven are given lives by Heaven, All beings under the heaven are given laws by Heaven.” This conviction is further explained in an other case by *The Book of History*, another one of the earliest Confucian *Five Classics*, as “Heaven also blesses his people by nominating their kings and teachers”. These classic statements clearly indicate that all beings under heaven and on the earth are the gifts of heaven in the form of natural evolution, and thus heaven is always blessing them in selecting and sending political leaders for their social affairs and teachers for their moral affairs. In this faith system, both political leaders and moral teachers must follow the goodwill of heaven, loving their people as much as Heaven gave them lives. The goodwill of heaven is much the same as the biological ancestor bearing lives to their offspring. Thus, the Confucian tradition has it that such

sacred goodwill should be harbored as national faith which is termed as *Worship of Heaven and Ancestor for Lives' Sake*. Logically, the worship of this kind is *Carrying out Heaven's Holy Mandate by Each Person*, hence constituting the combination between religious sentiment and secular endeavor of man to cherish lives, family ties, social ethics, and universal love.

Sacred Faith Based on Family Ties

Since, all beings including human being are the result of natural evolution at the goodwill of Heaven, Man must be grateful to Heaven for his life, and this is well believed as *Gratitude to Life*. Hence, the Confucian tradition firmly holds that this *Gratitude to Life* is universally applicable to all secular beings under heaven, so it must be abided by as the universal moral law, which is clearly stated in the expression as *in the crystal universe, the law of Heaven is glaringly visible*. However, as we relate this conviction to humans in his individuality, the immediate and frequent experience and feeling comes most dear in family ties, that is, a son got his life from his father, who carries the biological bond from his ancestor, who then in the final context from Heaven as the initial origin of life. In this logical context, human lives might be secular, but if he projects his life to the family ties tracing it to its earliest origin, he inevitably links this secularity to the sacredness of Heaven. Thus, family ties prove to be the very base that man can identify himself with the sacredness of Heaven. The immediate family life from your parents can very comfortably lead you to your ancestor and Heaven, from parental blood feeling to history of genealogy, and finally to holiness of Heaven. That is the very reason why every man should worship his ancestors together with Heaven, believing his ancestor's soul has already ascended to Heaven and thus inviting his ancestor's blessing from Heaven. In this understanding, family ties are the mediators between man and Heaven in the principle of life-bearing and blessing, by which the sacredness of Heaven frequents each family member when he esteems and cherishes his parents' devotion and love for his own life and he carries on the same family mission to his own children. Thus, by performing religious rituals to worship Heaven and ancestor, the Confucian scholars affirm that everything obtains its being from Heaven and human his life from his ancestor who in turn his own life from Heaven. Although, this affirmation may not be necessarily agreeable with biology and archeology evidences, it agrees with the family ties sentimentally and psychologically. Family ties testify to the value of each individual life and fulfill the kinship in its sacred sense. The forefather of Chinese historiography, scholar Sima Qian once concluded that "Heaven is the beginning of Man, while father and mother are the source of human life. Emotionally when man is thrown at the end of his power and wit he will invariably trace back to his beginning and source for psychological comfort. So we intuitively shout out for Heaven when we are stuck out of a sudden, we cry out for

parent when we are hurt physically to the extreme”.¹ His observation also hints at the sacred function of family ties in transforming human physical trouble into spiritual peace. Therefore, Confucian scholars always stress kinship as the paramount principle of all lives by which family ties are also believed to be that between heaven and human.

Kinship Expanded from Family to Country and to Ecological World

In the Confucian tradition, family is the basic unit of existence and continuation of life, while the country and society are the family of an expanded model, all of them being the consequence of Heaven in its evolution. In this idea, the sentiment and worship a man has for Heaven, is much the same as he should have for family, country, society, and the ecological world, since they are all platforms and sources of human life. From the scope of immediate experience and physically felt credibility, family could be the best place to testify the sacredness and value that Heaven exhibits in secular lives. When western people regard the church as the national incubator for their morality, they believe that the church is a kind of family where God shares sacredness with his believers.² In the Chinese tradition, the tender love of parents to their children and grateful love of children to their parents, are sentiments and values identical to those of Heaven, both constituting the absolute universality. This mundane ethics abided by in the Chinese family is identical to the holy principle of Heaven, so every Chinese family can be a western *church* in terms of nursing sacred love. People may wonder how the Chinese nation can survive vigorously for thousands of years with her largest world population without equally populated churches as there should be in the West? The reasonable answer could be that every family there has been performing as church relating ordinary human lives to the sacred mandate of Heaven. Thus the value nursed in the family should be consequently expanded to the country, society, and universe. In the perspective of the country, the sacred principle goes that leaders should love and care their subordinate civilians like parents do to their children, while ordinary civilians should respect their leaders as children respect their parents. Also, in the biological world or simply in the universe, every being should follow the principle of parent and children and brothers and sisters, loving each other, respecting each other, being friends to each other like kinship members in the family context. That is what Mencius declares: “To expand your respect towards your own parents to other’s parents, to offer tender loving care to your

¹ Sima Qian, “Biographies of Qu Yuan and Jia Yi, Historical Records (*shiji, quyuan jiasheng liezhuan*),” in *The Twenty-Four Histories* (Version of Simplified Chinese Characters) (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 2000), Vol.84,p.1933.

² Donald M. Bishop, “The Role of Religion in American Society,” in *The Communication (jiaoliu)* (Beijing: edited by American Embassy, 2000), Vol.1,p.29.

kids as well as other's, should such principle universally applied, one can rule the world under the heaven as easy as turning his palm. It is stated in *The Book of Poetry*, 'To set up a good example for your wife at home, then to influence positively on you brothers, then you can rule your country as harmoniously as home.' Such statement reveals the possible merits initiated by one's heart. Therefore, if you have a heart to expand and share grace with both your family members and the people in the world, you can unite the four seas at your disposal; if not, you can not secure your wife and children at home. The ancient saints were distinguished in this expansion of good-wished heart".³ This universal yet religious love generated from family experience is the mainstay faith of the Chinese nation, which idealizes as the Confucian motto "self regulating, family establishing, country ruling and world harmonizing". In the Chinese faith system such statements as 'All Beings under the heaven are of the same origin and hence of equal value, All beings under the heaven are just the intimate members of one big family, so China should be endeared and self-cherished as one person, Love in the family should be transformed into devotion to country. Government officials should devote to their country as children to their parent. All people under the heaven are just my brothers and sisters, and all beings are just like our human being. Integration between Heaven and Man.' These convictions of religious universality are the expressions of the equal value between being secular and sacred. That is how the Chinese could take secular as sacred and finally reach universal harmony.

Sacredness and Initiative of Human Life

As known to us all, the Christian faith typically strikes a contrast between God as the Creator and all beings in the universe as Creatures, the faith principle in this tradition being established by *other force*. The Creator by virtue of *other force* than the Creature created the whole universe with human beings included with original sin. This *other force* of the Creator may also expel his creature out of their Eden, the Paradise. He could punish his creature by introducing the Deluge to human beings or condemning them to hell eternally or saving them at doomsday. All these wishes are the miracles of the Creator of his own accord. The Creature is all the more passive before this *other force*. Logically, the faith of this sort is established by the principle of force, that is, they believe in God in fear of his punishment. In contrast, the Chinese faith is different in its origin, that is, all universal beings including the human race are just given birth by the goodwill of Heaven, for they are the offspring of a process of a universal evolution instead of any sacred miracle, all beings in the universe partaking of the sacredness of Heaven and depending on their respective inner initiative for their lives. The universal

³ Liang Hui Wang Shang, *The Works of Mencius*. (*mengzi, lianghuiwang shang*).

evolution of inner initiative of every being has been constantly stressed by *Yijing* or *the Book of Changes*, one of the Confucian *Five Classics*, as “Heaven represents the male principle of the universe while Earth the female one. So Heaven initiates the process of universe, the coordinated movement from the Earth gives birth to everything”.⁴ This process of the universe of lives bears much similarity to babies born in the human family way, demonstrating fully the unity of sacredness of Heaven and secularity of the family way of living. That is the very reason why *the Doctrine of the Mean*, one of the Confucian *Four Books*, underlines its first sentence as “The universal nature has been destined by heaven’s mandate”, which indicates that secular human nature is initiatively bestowed with sacredness of Heaven and this sacred initiative is also deeply rooted in human nature enabling him to motivate himself, to verify his holy nature, to experience the mandate of Heaven and to finally unify himself with Heaven. The faith of the Confucian style at this point may liberate believers to break away from his superstition towards external Sacredness as other force and encourage the believer to turn to his inner heart to experience the sacred value of Heaven. Therefore, the Chinese faith tradition does not cherish any blind worship toward other sacred forces than his intuitional intelligence; their believers are not seen as fanatically seeking after the so-called paradise to the detriment of family, country, and ecological world. Chinese believers often seek the unification between Heaven from outside and the Intuition from their inner heart so as to see the sacredness of Heaven and not violate the secularity of the human intuition at heart. In their religious dialectics, the loss of intuition at heart would instantly invalidate the holiness of Heaven. The individual intuition in the human heart bases every believer to evaluate the sacredness of Heaven, to examine the miracle invoker as mountebanks or even curse kings and emperors as universally hated thieves. If the miracle invokers, kings or emperors conduct themselves against human intuition, they are equally regarded as harmful to the sacredness of Heaven, and should be despised as demons. Thus, leaders at any level should love their masses as their own children, as does the emperor, *son of Heaven*, to his subjects, *the people of Heaven*. If a person who violates the universal law of loving each other like family members in this universe family, then anyone is simultaneously endowed with sacredness by Heaven to carry out his holy order to oust the violator from his post, and even eject his human qualification. This is what Confucian scholars convince as “Heaven sees clearly when human eyes see it clearly and Heaven hears clearly when human ears hear clearly”.⁵ Humans will see through all the dirty tricks of imposters and not be cheated by any cooked evidence just by their intuition and common sense. Finally, this respect towards secular life can harmoniously exhibit the sacredness of Heaven while coexisting peacefully with social progress in terms of science and democracy.

⁴ Xi Ci Xia, *The Book of Changes* (*zhouyi, xicizhuan xia*).

⁵ Wan Zhang Shang, *The Works of Mencius* (*mengzi, wanzhang shang*).

Chapter 3

The Definition of Religion

Introduction

In my research and understanding, religion could be briefed concisely as “faith established between human and his God”, but God is, of course, the equivalent term for any transcendent Being.

I think my short presentation about the concept of religion should be confined to the domain of contemporary Chinese scholarship, which includes the introduction and critical evaluations made by Chinese scholars toward western scholarship and their own contributions to the very concept. After this introduction and explanation, I beg to share my personal reflections on the concept with you and shall be happy to discuss it in this paper.

Intellectual Dilemma for Diversified Definitions

In fact, many dictionaries of either religion or philosophy have cleverly avoided a direct definition entry for religion, instead they purposely choose the substitutions of “natural religion”, “philosophy of religion,” and even “the study of religion” in their dictionaries. Yet in the Encyclopedia we have the entry of “religion”, but it is far from being a definition, explaining features, origins, histories, values, functions, education, institutions of religion, in some cases, of course, its essence. I boldly guess, the situations in the dictionaries where definition of religion should reasonably show up its holy picture revealed the embarrassment of scholars to come to a general agreement for the definition of their expertise. Thus when I introduce the discussions among Chinese scholars on this tough issue, I fully acknowledge it might be another blind guy in feeling the big elephant, but the sense is that we should encourage all blind guys in joining us in feeling the elephant before a whole picture of the animal becomes clear and vivid.

In their scholarship the type of feeling the animal comes up with five categories, the first is God-oriented description.

For this school of thought with God-oriented description we have Max Muller, Edward Burnett Tylor, and James George Frazer, all being western anthropologists of the nineteenth century.

Max Muller believed that human beings have a kind of instinctive desire and pursuit for the infinity, which distinguishes them from other animals; human beings have special psychological predilection toward the infinity, which can be further expressed as love for God. In this context, religion should be defined as human faith toward the infinity.

Edward Burnett Tylor, basing himself on the origin of animism, proclaims that the essence of religion is the human faith on spiritual beings.

James George Frazer is aware that the human faith can serve as a means to reach a compromise with supernatural beings, so he clearly states that religion, to his apprehension, is flattery or solace designated for the transcendent force of manipulating and controlling natural and human process. This type of description can be roughly attributed to as monotheism.

The second category in western scholarship is concerned with the impersonal-oriented description, which is frequently found in the Chinese religious Confucianism of heaven mandate, or the Nirvana-oriented Theravada Buddhism or big Way-oriented Daoism. These faith systems do not focus their interest on God or a supernatural Being.

The third category in western scholarship is the personal experience-oriented description, which emphasizes the subjective experience as the base and essence of religion. In this category we have three representatives in American pragmatist and psychologist William James, German theologian and philosopher Rudolf Otto, and British theologian John Macquarrie. For William James, in the Abraham Faith system and Buddhism, the creators of these faiths all declare their mythical experiences with God or the supernatural Being. Otto believes that the essence of religion is not social culture but individual mythical experience, so religion can be comprehended as complex committed in awe to the numinous. Macquarrie, in the same line, states that religion is the touch of the super Being, either God or a supernatural force, on human and human response to it. The interaction between touch and response is in fact subjective experience.

The fourth category in western scholarship is a social function-oriented description. The representative scholars are the French sociologist Emile Durkheim and the American sociologist Milton Yinger. Durkheim insists that religion is always closely associated with holy rituals and social activities; all religious rituals such as sacrifices, courtesies, oral precepts, theologian doctrines, religious institutions, and systems are determined by social functions, and are created in the process of social integration. Yinger agrees with Durkheim by saying that the fundamental issue of society is how human beings could achieve their greatest happiness and religion often functions as the means to reach that goal.

The Social function-oriented description leads to broadening religion so as to include communism, patriotism, nationalism, star-fans, and science addicts; these are sometimes labeled as secular religions.

The fifth category of western scholarship is linked with the Marxist concept of religion, which has been orthodox in China since 1949. Marx clearly states that religion is a human perverse concept of world outlook, therefore, it is the spiritual opium of the people. His colleague Friedrich Engels expounds in more detail that all religions are the mere illusory reflections of those manipulating forces in human daily lives; in these reflections human forces have been deviated into supernatural forces.

Definitions of Modern Chinese Academics

The definition by Chinese scholars on religion is mainly based on their understanding of western scholarship including Marxist views. The chief and most popular one is that of Prof. Lü Daji, retired fellow in the Institute of World Religions, CASS. His definition is:

“Religion is the social conscience on super-human and super-natural forces, and this conscience leads to human relevant faith and worship, and constitutes canonized, instituted and socialized cultural system.”¹

This definition is also simplified as the four-elements theorem, which stresses the elements of religious concepts, religious experience, religious activities, and religious institutions.

The last definition I introduce in this paper is my apprehension about religion, which is as follows:

Religion is the social and cultural system focused on the supernatural Being, which owes its birth and development to human society at its certain stage and is believed to manipulate and control the fate of both the universe and human beings. The supernatural Being at the core of this system may have diversified forms and names manifest from committed piety by various ways and means.

I would like to explain my definition in the following sentences: Religion is a popular and universal cultural system in the making of all nations, the distinction of which lies in that its kernel remains the object of human worship rather than intelligence. Since human exploration into the universe is an endless process, the essence in the universe logically proves to be a mystical object transcending human intelligence, thence constantly attracting human aspiration and constituting its faith. The combination between the transcending feature of object and the constant aspiration of the subject explains the duration of religion in human society. As a popularly sustained cultural system, religion is definitely diversified

¹ Lü Daji, *New Edition of Introduction to Religion Science* (Beijing: China Social Science Press, 2010),p.63.

in a variety of ways that people commit themselves to it; its doctrines, rituals, and forms vary with its affiliates at different stages of history and different moods of moral sensitivity.

Reflections from Chinese Intellectual Resources

The Book of Changes has been held as the ‘masterpiece of all classics’ (*qunjing zhishou*), being religiously accounted for both the origin of Confucianism and Neo-Daoism (in the term of one of the “*Three Classics of Metaphysics*[*sanxuan*]”), and also serving as the theoretical reference to Indian Buddhism. In interpreting its convictions in cosmic virtue, it states:

“The grand virtue in the universe is revealed in its evolution, the great treasure of saint is revealed in his powerful position, but the preservation of his powerful position is justified by humaneness and the uniting his people depends on assuring them with their wealth. Addition to these he should advocate the principle of righteousness in promoting wealth and of rules to regulate their social relations.”²

This statement concerning the social relations revealed in the universe may be apprehended in examining adequately the logical essentials and social merits of conventional ethics in our modern social relations.

Scientifically, we may not be able to trace and explain accurately and substantially the origin, process, and mechanism of the universe in its evolution, comparable to what we read in the *Genesis* of the Bible; yet we take it as the convictional base to keep and endear a sense of gratitude for our lives and for the vitality of the natural world. Furthermore, in the Chinese tradition we also have worship for our ancestors and ancient saints who have been accounted for as the intermediate agencies between Heaven the creator and the animated world including human beings as its creatures which justify both our biological lives and social relations. The natural evolution and social regulation for the Chinese, as revealed and interpreted in their much cited masterpiece *The Book of Changes*, are not acknowledged as cosmological science and family genealogy, but are accepted and believed as legendary sources for their intuitional commitment and social ethics.

In the modern west, Christianity still remains the cultural source for the already much enlightened people to express their ultimate concern, personal integrity, and social morality. In their modern Constitutions, there are no more scientific or social demonstrations for their civil rights expressed basically as “life, liberty and pursuit of happiness”, than fervent convictions in all types of human rights. In their case, religion as an intuitional conviction and cultural sense of affiliation

² Deng Qiubai, *The Book of Changes in Modern Chinese* (*baihua yijing*), (Changsha: Yuelu Press, 1993), p.435.

stands as a moral incubator, being evidenced by the durable church towers much the same as the bank halls for a prosperous economy.

Therefore, as long as human beings are animated by intuitional commitments and activated by social relations, religion will invariably function as emotion outlets and social morals. Thus observed and perceived from different religious traditions, I would rather be optimistic with a definition for religions to share that legendary sources and social ethics are the two dimensions to justify any religion in the human community, be it constructed and preserved in different ideologies, in different societies, and with different national heritages.

Chapter 4

A Hermeneutic Investigation into Heaven: The Key Concept of Chinese Faith System

Introduction

The system of concepts harbored in Chinese civilization for the previous 2,000 years is a sustained body of integration, accomplished with specific attributes of differentiating process that is a unified one which can be invariably achieved only by mechanism of reconciling the opposite two. Of all the opposite twos, in the edifice of Chinese concepts, the Integration between Heaven and Human (*tianren heyi*) comes first with Chinese Confucian tradition, which is sequentially followed by the integration between Dao (*Way*) and Qi (*Vehicle*) with Chinese Daoist tradition, and the integration between Xing (*Body*) and Shen (*Spirituality*) with Chinese Buddhist tradition. And if we acknowledge the unified body of these three traditions as the mainstay of Chinese civilization, we might as well recognize the dominant role of Confucian tradition. And again, in its own edifice of concepts, Heaven in the Integration between Heaven and Human is a conspicuous standout much similar to the Creator and Onto in western religion and philosophy.

As the initiator of Chinese Confucian tradition and a universally respected moral teacher for all possible generations to come (*wanshi shibiao*), Confucius (c.551–c.479 B.C.) is quoted as saying: “A gentleman has three targets to worship, firstly to worship the mandates of heaven, secondly the man in high position, and thirdly the words of saint.”¹ To him, the three targets all symbolize the transcendent beings in their different dimensions accordingly, the mandate of heaven being—the supreme dominator in the universe, the man in high position—the supreme ruler in society and the words of saint—the supreme authority in individual’s faith. The transcendent beings are here accentuated just for Confucian religious commitments. And in many other urgent cases Confucius expressed his paramount commitment to the mandate of heaven. And Sima Qian (c.154—about c.90 B.C.), the father of Chinese historiography in the Han Dynasty, also expressed his commitment to scholarship as “exploring into what exist between heaven and

¹ Ji Shi, *Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, jishi*).

human, investigating the laws governing social development, and accomplishing with originative statements.”² His scholastic volition equally reveals the religious commitment as his worshiped saint Confucius proposed for all future intellectuals in the World under the heaven, now China. Nearly 1,000 years later as in the Song Dynasty, another distinguished Confucian scholar Cheng Yi (1033–1107 A.D.) reemphasized the distinctive features between Confucian tradition and Chinese Buddhist tradition as “Confucian tenet focuses on Heaven while Buddhist on Heart.”³ As the most conspicuous concept, Heaven was in much heated argument among different schools of thought in the Yin and Zhou Dynasties (Yin: about c.1600–c.1046 B.C.; Zhou: about c.1046–c.256 B.C.), transmitting messages imagined in human heads. And the earliest Chinese character of heaven appeared in the excavated oracles in the Yin Dynasty symbolizes the head of fully developed human. For the whole span of the Yin and Zhou Dynasties, the concept of heaven had been exposed to senses of supreme cosmological ruler, his mandate, the natural world, the omens of human fate, the laws and rules of the universe, etc. Therefore, Confucius himself once exclaimed that “What a great leader Yao is!⁴ His undertakings are exceedingly magnificent just because he models himself after the rules of Heaven.”⁵ His exclamation divulged emotionally the sense of religious ultimacy and political justification.

In twentieth century, Dr. Feng Youlan, one of the chief contemporary Confucian philosophers, delineated the concept of heaven in the following five perspectives:

First, heaven carries connotation of a material sky, opposite to the Earth;
 Second, heaven carries connotation of nature and its laws, to be the natural world;
 Third, heaven carries connotation of universal dominator, a sense of religious God;
 Fourth, heaven carries connotation of moral principles, that is, the moral starry heaven or moral authority;
 Fifth, heaven carries connotation of human fate, mundane affairs destined at heaven’s invisible hands.⁶

Based on this historical and intellectual frame, it could be easier for us to approach the regular statements of Chinese emperors issuing their decrees as “Recalled by heaven’s mandate, the Imperial edicts thus issued” (*fengtian chengyun, huangdi zhaoyue*), to justify secular administration by holy authority, but Chinese civilian rebels could equally justify themselves by “Carrying out heaven’s

² Sima Qin, “A Letter to Ren An” (*shiji, bao ren an shu*), in *Historical Records* (Contrasted Version between Ancient and Modern Chinese), ed. by Yang Zhongxian and Hao Zhida. (International Cultural Press, 1992), Vol. 5, p. 787.

³ Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi, *The Posthumous Works of Cheng Brothers* (*er cheng yishu*) (Shanghai: Shanghai Classic Press, 1992), Vol. 21, II, p. 215.

⁴ Yao and Shun are the two most popularly worshipped legendary sage kings in Ancient China.

⁵ Tai Bo, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, taibo*).

⁶ Feng Youlan, *The Complete Works of Three Pines Hall* (*sansongtang quanji*) (hengzhou: Henan People’s Press, 2000), Vol. 9, p. 591.

mandate” (*titanxingdao*). And emperors would just call themselves “sons of heaven” (*tianzi*) and their empires are thus labeled as “Celestial Empires” (*tianchao*) while civilians are self-styled as “people of heaven” (*tianmin*), imperial officeholders are apprehended as “persons with human titles” (*renjue*) opposed to “persons with heaven titles” (*tianjue*), which is bravely advocated by independent Confucian scholars. Even in social dimension a person can remain a biological being with wealth and power, he is definitely excluded from human being when repudiated as “without heavenly guaranteed conscience” (*sangjintianliang*). So, we can be certain that an educated Chinese can not live an intellectual life without being associated with the concept of heaven.

Heaven as Natural World Opposite to the Earth

The first conceptual impression encountered in human experience might be the physical sense of heaven as opposite being to the Earth, above which it remains vertically a mere celestial body. The natural feature of heaven opposite to the Earth was popular among Confucian and Daoist scholars as well as those thinkers appeared in *The Book of Guanzi* (*guan zi*). The observation and reflection in *The Doctrine of the Mean* (*zhong yong*) revealed wide information on the natural phenomenon of heaven: “Heaven means to us what numerous units to calculation. In heaven when sun, moon and stars are putting together we make a parallel number of things on earth. The magnitude of heavenly bodies in their limitless numbers can therefore be deduced metaphysically from a drop of dust, which when accumulated to its extreme bears safely the weight of high mountains and sustain rivers their flows and seas their waves. With all physical beings on earth, one can metaphysically infer that equal number of things must be there in heaven.”⁷ Almost at the same time, Daoists and Legalists in Qi Dukedom (meaning the sect of Legalists interacting with their next door Confucians in Lu Dukedom, resulting in the phrase of Qi-Lu Culture) reached the similar conclusion that Zhuang Zi strongly advocates as the immensity of heaven in its height and depth, the transcendent feats of nature attracting human admiration and worship, and the compilers of *The Book of Guanzi* believe that constants of heaven, principles of the Earth and seasons of weather are metaphysically invariable through ages.

When referring to the natural quality of heaven Zhuang Zi is frequently quoted as saying, “What is heaven? What is human?...Bulls and horses with four legs are what heaven exactly mean. To control horse with twitch and bull’s nose with manipulating cord means human endeavor.”⁸ In comparison between heaven and human, Zhuang Zi here comes up with the natural state of things for heaven and the artificial reform of

⁷ See “The Doctrine of the Mean,” in *The Four Books of Modern Chinese* (*baihua sishu*), edit. and translated by Yang Bojun (Changsha: Yuelu Press, 1989), chapt. 26, p. 300.

⁸ Autumn Flood, *The Works of Zhuang Zi* (*zhuangzi, qiu shui*).

nature for human purposes. Still Zhuang Zi shows his particular interest in defining the whole natural world as heaven including the Earth, to be different with Confucian scholars and Qi State Legalists in his philosophy of equating all things in the universe (*qiwu*). And Qi State Legalists in *The Book of Guan Zi* delineate heaven in contrasts with both earth and human. While stressing the constants of heaven in comparison with the principles of the Earth, they have faith in that appropriate actions should be in agreement with the natural laws, and thus human safety and danger could be positively anticipated and properly managed. The initiated scrutiny over the doctrine of trinity of heaven, Earth and human was distinctively read in Mencius's concept of heaven, disadvantageous then to the earth which again to human (*tianshi buru dili, dili buru renhe*). But the comparison between heaven and the earth, or the comparison between heaven and human in *The Book of Guan Zi* often bears minute difference between the concept of material heaven and the concept of a natural heaven, for former the concept transmitting a message of cosmological element Qi which has since been exercising perennial influence upon future thinkers such as Zhuang Zi, Wang Chong, Zhang Zai, Wang Fuzhi, and the Confucian scholars of Qi School ("Qi" means cosmic air, or universal reason, different from Qi State, compared with Li School and Xin School), and for the latter concept transmitting a message of heaven as a natural world. In the natural domain of heaven Qi State Legalists and Confucian scholars of Qi School bear something in common, as to define heaven with the unity of space and energy in its maximum. Again we should be very careful to apprehend the nuances the concept of heaven revealing in two influential Confucian master scholars Mencius and Xun Zi, both of them derive their humanism from heaven the Nature, but with Mencius heaven the Nature reveals much more messages in human creativeness as to begin with mind to ponder over one's very heart, then to reflect on the Nature of all things under the heaven and finally reason about the Nature of heaven itself, and with Xun Zi heaven the Nature exhibits the constants of all things in their physical movement, and if we make the projection of our aspiration as the divine heaven, then we just spoil the Nature of heaven as diversified material beings. From the concept of heaven as nature, Mencius establishes his cosmological basis for cosmos manhood, the mentality and spirituality a great man has in defiance against vicious wealth, brutal force and self-contemptuous poverty, and also for his philosophy of cultivating cosmos-high-mindedness (*haoranzhengqi*). But Xun Zi takes example of heaven as Nature in explaining that a great man should master the natural laws to his own purpose just as heaven producing and manipulating all things in the natural world, a sense similar to that of Qi State Legalists and reinforced by his disciples who later became the most famous Legalists Han Fei and Li Si. For western people, who believe in God as Lawgiver, the association between natural law and positive law in the discipline of legal studies would not strike as a confrontation, but Chinese Confucian scholars divide themselves by the natural law of heaven, to cherish either its religious merits as in Mencius's case or its material merits as in Xun Zi's case. If we confine Xun Zi, regarded in some cases as the third important figure after Confucius and Mencius in Chinese Confucian tradition, to the advocacy of heaven's material merits in the most important context of scholarship in the pre-Qin

dynasties, we certainly line him with those Daoists and Legalists; and if we confine Mencius, whose name is frequently associated with Confucius as the Confucius and Mencius Way (*kongmengzhidao*), to the advocacy of heaven's dynamics in its natural evolution giving to the birth of human being as the most perfect and active product and agent, we are sure to convince ourselves that Mencius had actually cultivated a Confucian-styled cosmological liberalism inherited by Lu Jiuyuan in the Song Dynasty (A.D.960–1279) and Wang Yangming in the Ming Dynasty (A.D.1368–1644). This cosmological liberalism, more often labeled as Heart School of Confucian Scholarship (*xinxue*, also translated as Mind School or Intuition School, as distinguished from the other two schools of Li and Qi, that is, *lixue* and *qixue*) or advocates of heaven's mandates (*tianminglunzhe*), thus shares much in common with the school of Mo Zi, the advocate of heaven's wills (*tianzhi*). By so-called mandates and wills, the concept of heaven in these cases definitely transmits messages of a personal god. Therefore, we may be safe to state that the distinctive traits of Confucian tradition did have their origins from their respective approaches to heaven as nature.

In the following dynasty after the Zhou-Qin Dynasties (Zhou: c.1046–c.256 B.C.; Qin: c.221–c.206 B.C.), the scholars in the Han Dynasty (c.202 B.C.–A.D.220) advanced their discussions about the concept of heaven in two different directions, that is, one to the Coincidence of Heaven and Human (Tian Ren Gan Ying), another to the natural feat of heaven. For Dong Zhongshu (c.179–c.104 B.C.), the most influential Confucian scholar in the Han Dynasty, the Coincidence of Heaven and Human constitutes a religion in which the mandates of heaven are revealed to human through prophecy of Confucian scholars; but Wang Chong (27–97 A.D.), a severe critic to Confucian and Moist prophecy, insisted on the natural quality of heaven. And the debate continued to the Tang Dynasty (618–907 A.D.) to meet with a balanced and comprehensive remark by scholar Liu Yuxi (772–842 A.D.):“The reflections on heaven so far can be generalized into two conclusions, that of a willed being and that of the natural being. For those believing in visible punishment for crime or in being awarded for moral merits, ..heaven always silently favors those behave morally; for those believing in invisible indifference for human behavior, heaven proves to be nothing more than the natural existence above earth, striking animals and trees with thunder and lightning not for their crimes and moistening and warming weeds and bushes not for their benevolence,...so there goes the prevailing theory of heaven as a natural and celestial body.”⁹ It is apparent that his observation about the historical arguments among scholars of different thoughts is correct, but his judgment on the prevalence of the proposal that heaven reveals nothing more than as a natural and celestial body does not always hold water, for ordinary Chinese, especially self-reckoned as the civilians under the heaven, never hesitate to avail themselves this tradition to express their ultimate concern by agent of a physically transcendent

⁹ Liu Yuxi, “On Heaven,” in *The Works of Liu Yuxi (liuyuxi ji)* (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Press, 1975), p. 51.

heaven despite their clear conviction that heaven is there as an evident materialistically body as the Earth. When they feel comfortable with their secular politics, they curse heaven for its natural disasters; but when they are disappointed at their secular politics, they venerate the same natural disasters as dually sacred punishment to the evil politics having violated heaven's mandates. A thoughtful and inspiring example to the religiosity revealed in the concept of heaven could be one with Deng Xiaoping, the general architect of China's political and economic reform, who, when he was disgraced and dismissed during the Great Cultural Revolution (1966–1976 A.D.) exclaimed over the air crash of Lin Biao, his political opponent, as the divine penalty from heaven.

Religious Facets of Heaven

Although in the dimension of rationalization Chinese scholars and civilian alike acknowledge that heaven is nothing more consecrated than celestial body above the Earth, yet they never hesitate to resort to heaven as divine media for their ultimate concern. There are plenty of entries in Chinese daily expressions relevant to the religious facets of heaven such as “Nothing escapes the heaven's eyes” (*cangtian youyan*), “The net of heaven has large meshes, but it lets nothing through” (*tianwanghuihui, shuerbulou*), an admirable marriage is “Perfectly matched by Heaven” (*tianzuozihe*, or marriage made in heaven), “Heaven does not let down a ready mind” (*cangtian bufu youxinren*), or they even come up with “Heaven Master's Religion” (*tianzhujiao*) for Catholic Church. In Chinese Capital Beijing, there are two royal religious sites which had been the holy platforms for Emperors to offer great sacrifice to Heaven and Earth known as The Temple of Heaven (*tiantan*) and The Temple of Earth (*ditan*), and even now the holy platforms only serve as civilian parks, but their religious messages are still sensed in civilian daily lives, especially when performing wedding ceremony in a typical Chinese way the bride and bridegroom have to bow their respects to Heaven and Earth before their respective parents, transmitting similar sense of Scandinavian Goddess Freya.

For traditional Chinese concept the origin of all lives on the Earth is always associated with the sense of heaven, human ancestors as well as human ethics. In the Abraham faith system the origin of the creature was associated only with Creator the God, human ancestors with Adam, and Eve, also belong to holy creature, and human ethics with religious doctrines and rituals. As for the origin of all lives on the Earth, one of the earliest classics of Confucian tradition clearly stated: “All creatures have their origins from heaven, so do human beings their ancestors. So sacrifices offered to Master Heaven are intended to exhibit our greatest filial piety for the origin of our

lives.”¹⁰ Almost on the same base the most authentic Confucian classic *The Book of Changes* or *Zhou Yi* declares that “The intercourse between heaven and earth gives birth to all creatures under the heaven and on the earth, among all creatures there are male and female as holy dynamics for life evolution, that produces the marriage between husband and wife, that evolution of human beings brings about the relationship between father and son, that again makes a social model for king and his court attendants, and this model reveals the subordination of the lower levels to the higher, and finally this model establishes an appropriate social order.”¹¹ These statements are the reflections of ancient Chinese on the origins of lives, their emotional commitments, and moral respects to lives, paving the grounds for their politics and morality. The religious feats of a creator and lawgiver are hereby insinuated by their apprehension to heaven and religious rituals observed accordingly.

The sense of ultimate concern expressed in their statements and religious sacrifices is invariably linked with heaven, which Chinese meant it to be the Master God stationing metaphysically above all other physical gods. For ancient Chinese, heaven in faith cases is always the symbol of origin of time, space, life, and authority. So, we do not have definite archaeological articles or historical archives to trace the accurate date or documents about the religious concept of heaven. What we have only are the legendary stories about the Chinese ancestor heroes, who are either the devoted adherents to the mandate of heaven or chosen by heaven’s invisible hands to be the king or moral teacher of civilians. The Chinese legendary stories often go this way that there was a time long before the first dynasty of Xia (the first of all 12 dynasties for the duration of 5,000 years history which ended by the 1911 Republic Revolution) when kings consecrated themselves by carrying out the rules of heaven. We have this compliment paid to Saint Yao by Confucius as “The gorgeous authority crowns the heaven, only Saint Yao is justified to follow him, the ruler of the universe.”¹² Yao, Shun, and Yu are the three popular saints in Chinese legend before the authentically recorded history who have been symbolizing the divinity, authority, and morality for Confucian scholars at least, and yet they were all chosen by heaven as Mencius generalized from the quotations in Shang Shu or *The Book of History*, “People are born under the heaven, their kings and moral teachers are nominated accordingly, the mission of whom is to assist their Heaven God, thus making his holy grace universally cherished.”¹³ Shang Shu is the authorized documents concerning the political and social status of the Shang Dynasty (about c.1675–c.1029 B.C.), previous to the Zhou Dynasty (about c.2033–c.1562 B.C.) in which both Confucius and Mencius lived, and quotations from Shang Shu are often employed to make comparison with oral heritage of legendary

¹⁰ Sacrifices to Heaven, *The Book of Proprieties* (*lij, jiao te sheng*). (Changsha: Yuelu Press, 1989), p. 383.

¹¹ Explanation to Divinatory Symbols Part II, *The Book of Changes* (*zhouyi, xugua zhuan xiapian*).

¹² Tai Bo, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, taibo*).

¹³ Liang Hui Wang, Xia, *The Works of Mencius* (*mengzi, lianghuiwang xia*).

heroes by scholars at large. For the Chinese then the concept of heaven was more often apprehended with obvious transcendent sense and heaven, thereby, worshiped as the divine Being which brought about all secular beings and sanctified the mundane social powers with the mandate of heaven. And again accompanied and reinforced by the ever excavated inscriptions on oracle bones of the Shang Dynasty, the worships were popular and important for both social and spiritual situations. Since heaven was believed to be the origin of all beings in the universe, the religious worship for Chinese in the Shang Dynasty was institutionalized as a hierarchy of gods, the highest being of heaven, the second natural world, and the third human ancestry. Why does the object of this traditional worship appear to be different from the God featured as wholly otherness in the Abraham Faith System? Just because of religious cosmology. In the Abraham Faith System, God is believed to be the creator, thence the cosmology logically being ascertained as one of architect or designer and universe only being contingent to the mercy of God's free will. So, the worship in that system must go absolutely and exclusively to the Creator, which by definition monopolizes any possibility to repudiate his creation. While in the worship to heaven of ancient Chinese the religious cosmology is one featured with evolution, a process by which heaven and all his descendents are interrelated biologically and morally. In a cosmological intercourse, the heaven positions himself like a male and the Earth a female before everything is born like human babies, so heaven, emperor, husband, father, or man in general symbolizes the moral of power, motion, life, commitment, creativity, bravery, generosity, tolerance, solidarity, integrity, and so on. These are the morals incubated by the religious concept of heaven for ancient Chinese. So, worship or religious sacrifices were then open to natural world and ancestors sacredly adjacent to heaven, to make this faith system distinctive from that of Abraham Faith System. For Chinese the universe is not the product of the holy architect or the creator, but rather a cosmos family headed by heaven whose holy message has been genetically and universally transmitted. In essence, the religious worship cultivated in ancient times long before the recorded history is the homage expressed to human gratitude for a divine chain connecting human to his imaginary forefather, the heaven. Because heaven is just above man's head and imagined to be the cosmos father, it is often personalized as an Emperor High in the Sky (*shangdi* or the Chinese God), the semantic translation for western God or Creator. But be attentive, there certainly remains the subtle nuance between heaven and creator, the former hinting at biological and emotional kinship while the latter at logical and miraculous correlation. Just for this nuance that the natural world including the Earth, mountains, rivers, and human ancestors as well as heroes in various professions are all accepted into Chinese worship system.

According to legendary descriptions in *The Book of Guan Zi*, there had been 72 kings or emperors performing sacrifices to heaven before the book itself was written, to signify the primitive source of human life and the time-honored orthodox of heaven. The sacrifices offered to heaven that were exclusively performed by kings or emperors were then termed Feng Chan, meaning the sons of heaven chose the highest mountain as the site, then the Tai Shan Mountain, to

devote the most valuable to heaven as holy tribute, and then chose small hill nearby at Liang Fu to devote tribute to the Earth. This royal sacrifice must be performed when each dynasty was shifted by revolution, meaning human change of power by carrying out the mandate of heaven and reporting to heaven for accomplishing his holy mission. But there were many occasions when Chinese emperors were more likely to choose the suburbs of their capital as the sites to perform sacrifices for heaven since central China or northern China with easy geographic access to Tai Shan was frequently harassed by bordering tribes or ethnic powers. Anyhow, the sites other than Tai Shan do not necessarily make any difference in the religious sense of heaven as *The Doctrine of the Mean* put it: “the purpose of sacrifices for heaven and earth is to pay homage to the Emperor High in the Sky” (*shangdi* or the Chinese God). In the same line we can understand why Confucius highly recommended Da Yu, the first emperor of the Xia Dynasty, as the saint emperor, “Why should I be so lavish in Da Yu’s praise for his perfect moral? Just to think that he, as an emperor, confines himself to very humble food in order to feed sacrifices to his ancestor, can wear very shabby clothes in daily lives but reserves no efforts in full-dress ceremony for heaven’s holiness, and is reluctant to spent money in building his palace but rather generous in financing irrigation ditches.”¹⁴ By pronouncing eulogy on Da Yu, Confucius just exposed himself to the conviction and populace of heaven faith practice at the period and to the religious profession as a Ritual Performer, the title and pronunciation of Chinese Kong Zi or Kong Fu Zi, which was later on Latinized by western missionaries as Confucius.

Ritual Performers, at least no later than the Shang Dynasty, were the professional priests who presided over all kinds of ceremonies concerning heaven or ancestor worships. In the Shan Dynasty, the dominant worships were performed mainly to heaven and ancestors, and in a conviction that emperor was the son of heaven and all human beings were the offsprings of heaven through biological mechanism of their respective ancestors, there was a set of sacrificial rituals consequentially linked to heaven in the royal family and to ancestors in civilian families, resulting in a well-known faith system of worshiping heaven and ancestors. Ritual Performers, accordingly, were not only the professional keepers of the faith system but also teachers to train their descendents or disciples, their sacrificial activities performed an important function as to establish the mythical ties between Master in heaven and his sons, the persons in secular power, on the Earth, and between the ancestors and their descendents. For royal family members, the Ritual Performers were their hired religious performers to witness the justification of their powers in a holy cosmological order; and for ordinary civilians they were also social experts to help cultivating mundane ethics with gratitude to the origin of their lives. They were, in fact, the masters of religious ceremonies to communicate as mediators between the Master in heaven and the rulers on the Earth, between the rulers and their subjects, and between ordinary persons and

¹⁴ Tai Bo, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, taibo*).

their spiritually worshiped ancestors. So, if we agree that the Chinese faith system is one of heaven and ancestors worship, then the Ritual Performers are its clergy.

And again, another feature of Chinese Ritual Performer is in its character building that is the combination of Chinese letters, should be born in mind in apprehending the essence of Ritual Performer. Prof. Xu Zhongshu, a well-known philologist of ancient Chinese characters, expounded his reasoning in the combination with character Ru as inscribed on the excavated oracle bones this way, “Ru existed as early as in the Shang Dynasty, its character inscribed on the oracle bones appeared like a bathing person by pouring water from head down. In that time, the ancients may not be able to build large basin, they had to baptize themselves with water pitcher, so the character Ru bears the image of the person baptizing himself head downward.”¹⁵ Why should bathing be associated with Ritual Performer? As explained in classical Chinese documents, the religious person must take bath before performing their divine service as to show his sincerity to Master in heaven, to the spirits of their ancestors and also to demonstrate the clean purity in morality as expected both secularly and sacredly. But the function and essence of Ritual Performer had undergone a gradual change from clergy to secular teachers in the Zhou Dynasty, with Confucius as their most distinguished figure, who eventually is accepted as the entry substitute for ancient Ritual Performers.

We may deduce from the previous description that even before the emergence of Ritual Performers as clergy in the Shang Dynasty, there must have been the concept of heaven as an absolute metaphysical Being to usher in the correlated religious ceremony. The Master in heaven is actually the combination of the ancient god of Shang’s primitive clan and the hieroglyph of human worship, acquiring the sense of faith for the highest master, similar to God, the creator. But there also exists the nuance between Chinese Master in heaven or simply Heaven and the western creator in that Heaven only produces everything in the process of evolution, so witnesses of which are also brought into the frame of worship such as the Earth, the Sun, the Moon, stars, mountains and rivers, even in daily lives of a family the worship should include the ones performed for door, kitchen, stove, and “spirits and ghosts for hundreds of beings” (*baiwuzhimei*).

The Zhou Dynasty, especially in its span called the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States, was often associated with “the contention among the hundred schools of thought and letting a hundred flowers bloom” (*baijia zhengming, bahihua qifang*), in which period the concept of heaven had gone through various analyses and differentiation from the sacred to the secular with Confucius as their outstanding expounder. And the succeeding dynasty was the Han Dynasty, and its most prestigious Confucian scholar was Dong Zhongshu, whose explanation about heaven was equally popular in society as his political suggestion of “banishing all other schools of thought than Confucianism as to maintain the latter’s exclusive ideological dominance.” (*bachu baijia, duzun rushu*) He stressed the three aspects

¹⁵ Xu Zhongshu, “Ru Appeared in Oracle-Bone Inscription,” in *Journal of Sichuan University* (Chengdu : Sichuan University Press, 1975), Vol. 4.

of heaven as “the greatest master of all gods” (*baishen zhi dajun*), “the earliest ancestor of all beings” (*qunwu zhi zhu*) and “the highest nominator of all emperors.” (*shouming zhi jun, tianyi zhi suoyu ye*)¹⁶ And his philosophy about heaven was acknowledged as official ideology and the faith for heaven and ancestors as the national religion in the Han Dynasty.

If we agree that Dong Zhongshu aims at the establishment of political justification by introducing the concept of heaven into Chinese emperorship, then we should also notice about the explanation of heaven from the most influential historian Sima Qian, who was the peer scholar of Dong Zhongshu but was punished by castration for offensive criticism to his emperor. Sima Qian’s observation about heaven is more pertinent to religiosity of human nature in that “Heaven is the beginning of Man, while father and mother are the source of human life. Emotionally when man is thrown at the end of his power and wit he will invariably trace back to his beginning and source for psychologic comfort. So we intuitively shout out for Heaven when we are stuck out of a sudden, we cry out for parent when we are hurt physically to the extreme.”¹⁷ Encouraged by the emperors of the Han Dynasty “The Doctrines of Subjugating Emperors to Heaven and Subjugating Civilians to Their Emperors” (*qumin er shenjun, qujun er shentian*), proposed by Dong Zhongshu as the heaven faith system and generalized by Sima Qian as universal human nature, eventually became the culture of Han, and people keeping faith with this culture are styled Han people, who constitute the overwhelming majority of Chinese for more than 2,000 years. And furthermore, this heaven faith system was gradually identified as the Integration between Heaven and Human, a peculiar Chinese philosophy of religion.

Political Facets of Heaven

In the context of western civilization, we have the balanced concepts of ruling by divine right and of unalienable human rights endowed by their creator. And equally, in the context of Chinese civilization, we have the balanced concepts of abiding by the heaven mandate by monarchical authorities and of universal human nature evolved from their heaven origin. In a political frame with religious resource in heaven, both emperors and their subjects believe in heaven as their last resort. The conviction that human nature is evolved from heaven not only provides the base for Confucian ethics in humanness, the key concept of Confucianism pronounced as Ren in Chinese, but also forms the political principle of heaven in Confucianism, pronounced as Tian Dao or briefly Dao in Chinese. This judgment

¹⁶ See Lü Daji, and Mou Zhongjian, *An Introduction to Chinese Religion and Chinese Culture* (Beijing: China Social Science Press, 2005), p. 161.

¹⁷ Sima Qian, “Biographies of Qu Yuan and Jia Yi, Historical Records (*shiji, quyuan jiasheng liezhuan*),” in *The Twenty-Four Histories* (Version of Simplified Chinese Characters) (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 2000), Vol. 84, p. 1933.

can be reinforced in two cases by Confucius when he claimed firmly in the most dangerous situation the holy mission entrusted on him by heaven and when he positioned his awe and respect for heaven mandate before persons in high political positions.

It has been an academic consensus that the basic concept of heaven in the Three Dynasties of the Xia, the Shang, and the Zhou is a religious one, and its consequential principle of the Integration between Heaven and Human bears the feature of the theology of heaven mandate, which has been influential in all aspects of Chinese civilization since then. If we do not trace the origin of its religious tradition, we may not easily understand why Confucius could render a preference of Dao before parents or even emperors in either a small family or an expanded family, the state or country, where filial piety and loyalty are thought to be the most important morality. As I have explained that Confucius is always conscious of his holy mission from heaven mandate in any disadvantageous situation, inspiring him to disseminate his political and social ideals. An extreme example was given when he was besieged by people of State Kuang. He remained all the calm and confidence in explaining this to his horrified disciples: “Since Wen Wang the King of the Zhou Dynasty passed away, the holy mission of heaven has been shifted on me. If Master heaven wills to mandate the finish of Zhou’s rituals, then it would not be possible for me to be versed with this rituals; if Master heaven wills to mandate the preservation of Zhou’s rituals, then people of State Kuang could do nothing harmful to me.”¹⁸ In persuading the kings in different states Confucius often had to confront unexpected danger and his attempted murder, yet he just defied them by this conviction: “I am endowed by heaven with moral bravery, General Huan Tui of State Song could never succeed in murdering me.”¹⁹ He was in steady faith that he had been carrying out the holy mission of heaven in this secular world under the heaven.

The holy mission of heaven trusted on him does not only mean personal belief and physical safety for Confucius, but also the universal law to abide by the heaven with special forms of family ethics and social politics. Although the mandate of heaven revealed to him as holy mission, still it remained an invisible transcendent Being which would be applied as the ultimate authority in the forms of family ethics and social politics. With this, we are a little bit sure not to be confused with his wording redundancy concerning politics when responding an inquiry from Prince Jing of Qi State for governance: “There must be Prince and princes, Minister and ministers, Father and fathers and Son and sons.” (*junjun, chenchen, fufu, zizi*). Prince Jing seemed to catch what Confucius hinted by reflection that “Indeed, if the princes are not a prince, the ministers not a minister, the fathers not a father, the sons not a son, the consequential disorder will just spoil my revenue.”²⁰ For the first capitalized Prince, Minister, Father, and Son, they

¹⁸ Zi Han, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, zihan*).

¹⁹ Shu Er, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, shu er*).

²⁰ Yan Yuan, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, yanyuan*).

were the metaphysical beings endowed by Master heaven, like Plato's Forms, and the physical princes, ministers, fathers, and sons are just the poor copies of the correlative metaphysical beings which have established ultimate orientations for physical beings to materialize. For this politics of religious logic, Chinese often discuss the policy of the country and the ethics of the family on the same level, naming the country with a combination of family and country (*guojia*), or associating individual family with family congregated country and then with the world under the heaven (*jiaguo tianxia*), regarding the emperor the son of heaven as well as the father of all his civilians and the civilians the people of heaven as well as the children of the emperor. Within this political structure of religious logic, we shall not be so quick to a rash conclusion that Confucian doctrine of politics is one of stereotyped hierarchy emphasizing the authorities of emperor, minister, husband, and father over their subjects, subordinates, wives, and sons. In fact, this political doctrine of religious logic often exposes Confucius or Confucian scholars to the integrity of personal independence and initiative such as "We only serve the emperor in the principle of heaven, the Dao, or otherwise we may leave him alone."²¹ Confucius also links the politics of state and the individual moral with the cosmological doctrine of heaven, Tian Dao or Dao, when he explains this way: "The policy for a gentle person should be honest in learning and determinate in living morally. He should never enter into an endangered state and settle down in disorganized state. If the world follows the doctrine of heaven, then be in the world actively; if the world goes against the doctrine of heaven, then be evasive from it. If the policy of a state is consistent with Dao, it would be disgrace to be poor and humble; if the policy of a state is inconsistent with Dao, it would also be disgrace to be rich and noble."²² In these contexts, Confucius believes that the universal doctrine of heaven transcends all social and moral doctrines under the heaven as their ontological origin, so the relations between prince and minister, between father and son must conform with the transcendent principle of heaven, the Tian Dao or Dao, that is why social politics is not construed in hierarchical structure among prince, minister, father, and son, but in a contrastive frame between physical beings and metaphysical Being, which in our case is the relation between prince and princes, minister and ministers, father and fathers. As for prince or father in social or family circumstances, ministers or sons may have metaphysical doctrine, or Dao, to justify themselves in persuading their prince or father to comply with the established norms designated by heaven. The application of this policy of heaven in social and family circumstances is clearly stated in *The Book of Proprieties (Li Ji)* "The rite for a minister to admonish his prince should be in private, if he admonishes his prince this way for several times and still to no effect, then he should abandon his company with the prince. The rite for a son to admonish his parent should be in politeness, if he admonishes his parent this way for several times and still to no effect, then he should keep his company with the

²¹ Xian Jin, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, xianjin*).

²² Tai Bo, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, taibo*).

parent in tears.”²³ If individual life, family and country are all physical beings under the heaven as consequential attendants to the cosmological principle of heaven; so, we can ascertain the universal principle that an individual, either as minister or son, justifies himself in admonishing his prince or parent, and that universal principle reveals the political facets of heaven, guiding individual in his actions either in family and society, structuring the cosmological context from the individual’s self-conscience to knowledge accumulation, to honest intention, to justice in mind, to integrity in personality, to unity in family, to solidarity in country, and to harmony in the universe or a world under the heaven.

In Confucian tradition, Mencius is particularly distinguished in two dimensions, that is, in the dimension of personal integrity based on heart-nature-mandate cosmology and in the dimension of political philosophy based on the preference of people to their monarchs. For the heart-nature-mandate cosmology, Mencius expounded this way: “Give heart to yourself in exploring the universal nature of all beings, and if you finally understand what the universal nature means in all beings, you understand in deed what heaven implies. Therefore, a person should cherish his heart this way and appreciate the universal nature of all beings and comply with the mandate of heaven accordingly. These merits accomplished, a person would not be disturbed by his life expectancy, either long or short, just cultivating himself at ease and reconciling his life with what heaven graciously assigns.”²⁴ With Mencius’s epistemological cosmology here we can recall the cogence of life in Chinese character Life as one, Xing Ming, which in an intellectual journey begins from a person’s heart to his own life, then to all lives endowed with universal nature by heaven. So, this cosmology inspires us to see the relation between Life, Xing Ming, and lives, Sheng Ming, Ming meaning the mandate of heaven, then we can develop Confucius motto of politics “There must be Being and beings” into “There must be Life and lives”. In this journey from heart to heaven mandate, human right and life are extremely stressed, similar to Kantian association between starry heaven and moral law stressing the religious justification for human morality instead of human rights. In this contrast, we may be safe to say Kantian god is a moral one while Mencius’s heaven is a political one. Probably, that is why human right and life become so vital and paramount in Mencius’s politics, a much more praised and exalted pattern of human-right-centered democracy in Confucian tradition. This cosmology also provides an intellectual picture of Mencius for us to see how the preference of people to their monarchs could be accepted as politics in Chinese society of patriarchal and hierarchical system. This cosmology, much like basic human rights endowed by his creator in the western religion context, equally warrants Mencius in personal integrity for a subject to defy his monarch: “If a monarch treats his subjects as his own hands and feet, then the subjects should treat the monarch as their own hearts; if a monarch treats his subjects as his dogs and horses, then the subjects should

²³ Qu Li, *The Book of Proprieties (liji, quli)* (Changsha: Yuelu Press, 1989), p. 293.

²⁴ Jin Xin Shang, *The Works of Mencius (mengzi, jinxin shang)*.

treat the monarch as their servants; if a monarch treats his subjects as trifling articles, then the subjects should treat the monarch as their enemies.”²⁵ The politics proposed by Mencius is further delineated by Xun Zi, possibly the third VIP in Confucian tradition of the pre-Qin Dynasty, in his *The Politics of Subjects* (*Xunzi-chendao*) as “Serving Dao rather than Monarch” (*congdao bu congjun*). These examinations on politics supplied Chinese scholarship with cosmological ethics and legitimacy that individual initiative is endowed with divinity of heaven. They are also abbreviated as the ‘conscience of heaven’ (*tianliang*), assumingly residing in every heart and constituting the supremacy of all rights and principles. According to Mencius, this supremacy insinuates itself into every spheres of social and political life, when confronted with them, a person with conscience of heaven may choose to give up his title as a king in order to remain a committed son to his parent like Saint Shun, the king before Saint Yao.

In Confucian context, the Three Dynasties of the Xia, the Shang, and the Zhou before the Qin and Han Dynasties are the dynasties of grace and glories, much more like the Silver Age in Greece and Rome, and the Golden Age of British Victoria. These ages had not only witnessed the legendary and recorded history of 3,000 years before Qin but also commenced administrative Chinese empire for another consecutive history of more than 2,000 years. For the Three Dynasties and their prior periods, Confucius, Mencius and Xun Zi had generated their political philosophies associated with religious commitment, individual commitment and natural commitment separately. For the Han Dynasty, which inherited Qin’s geographic and administrative empire but its political philosophy, Dong Zhongshu proposed ideological dominance of Confucianism to counterbalance the Legalist radicalism in the Qin Dynasty, the most influential one as to have conquered and unified all warring states and the most notorious one as well for its shortest imperial authority of only 16 years (c.221–c.206 B.C.) For this contradictory features the Qin is often connected with the Han as Qin-Han Dynasties, indicating Qin’s imperial system was inherited by Han while its legalist ideology was rectified by Confucianism represented by Dong Zhongshu. The combination of Qin’s accomplishment of Chinese empire and Han’s establishment of Confucian doctrine constitutes a typical Han-cultured China for the next 2,000 years. In this conceptual China, Dong Zhongshu as a Confucian scholar and theologian could be the least person to neglect when dealing with the political facets of heaven in Confucian China.

Scholars generally agreed that Dong Zhongshu’s endeavor really pushed pre-Qin Confucianism in the direction of theological politics when his political philosophy was accepted and put into governance by Han imperial authorities. When responding the inquiry concerning governmental politics in the imperial examination, Dong Zhongshu expounded that “The justification of Dao originated in heaven, so if heaven does not alter, neither does Dao. That is the principle by which Yu follows Shun, and Shun follows Yao, thus these three most respected

²⁵ Li Lou Xia, *The Works of Mencius* (*mengzi, lilou xia*).

Saint Kings have cultivated a sustained Dao, a unified politics.”²⁶ And his reflection on politics is more directly expressed as “the Three Principles of Saint Rule is legitimized by Heaven”,²⁷ namely the principle of prince’s preference to minister, the principle of father’s preference to son, and the principle of husband’s preference to wife. Some power oriented explanations would avail themselves by this expression to justify biased authoritarianism of prince, father, and husband, but what Dong Zhongshu intends to demonstrate is the supremacy of heaven over any secular power, that is, to confine the power of prince to the mandate of heaven (*qujun er shentian*). From his stressing the supremacy of heaven mandate, I could infer that Dong’s introduction of heaven into the political arena in the Han Dynasty is to rectify Legalist totalitarianism of the Qin Dynasty, as to make perfect the Confucian politics of Being and beings as well as Mencius’s heart-nature-mandate cosmology. In this context, the final piety for cosmos-family originated from heart to express one’s gratitude for life’s sake is invested with the highest legitimacy of religious sacredness, so at the suggestion of Dong Zhongshu, Han Emperor Wu Di established a political promotion system based on ‘Final Piety and Clean Civil Service’ (*xiaolian*) and it had since been maintained in imperial civil service till the establishment of Republic of China in 1911.

For the 800 years of the Zhou Dynasty, Ritual Performers or Confucians, Moists, and Legalists had been contending for the orthodoxy of their political ideology, but only to witness the victory of Legalists in Qin’s conquests and its short-lived reunion of China. The tragedy of Legalist victory yet was very soon provoked by massive revolts against Qin’s tyranny and cheered by Confucian scholars in the Han Dynasty. Having learned from the mistakes of Legalist secular and radical instrumentalism, Dong Zhongshu introduced the Confucian theology of heaven mandate into the Chinese imperial politics. Scholars used to blame Dong Zhongshu for his endeavor to turn Confucianism into a religion of heaven mandate, not being able to associate this religious turn of Confucianism with the ideological picture of contending schools of thought. But my thesis is to defend for Dong Zhongshu just because that his proposal for heaven mandate accomplishes at least three missions: to build up a more comprehensive Confucian political theory, to counterbalance the radical instrumentalism of Legalists, and to furnish Chinese imperial civil service with holy justification, without which civilian community may not justify itself in confining and rectifying the dictatorship of the imperial powers, leaving Confucian orientation of heaven mandate still at the mercy of secular power. With Dong Zhongshu’s efforts of religious facets, we can logically bring the ideas of Zhou Dunyi in his “A saint should aspire to be heavenly blessed”, “A gentleman should aspire to be saint” and “A person should aspire to

²⁶ Dong Zhongshu: “Responding to Gifted Appointment, Chapter 3 (*ju xianliang duice*),” in *A Brief Resources in Chinese History of Philosophy, Part I, from Western and Eastern Han to Sui and Tang Dynasties* (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 1963), p. 18.

²⁷ Dong, “Sophistication on Divine Mission (*ji yi*),” in *Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals* (*chunqiu fanlu*) (Shanghai: Shanghai Classic Press, 1989), p. 74.

be gentleman”,²⁸ and Zhang Zai in his “To testify a cosmic heart between heaven and earth, to vindicate the heaven’s mandate for all human beings, to accomplish the scholarship of ancient Saints and to bring about universal harmony for future generations”²⁹ into the general scheme of Chinese culture.

Cultural Implications of Heaven

The definition of culture could be one of the most confusing concepts scholars have so far encountered. The reason for this amusing perplexity, I reflect, is that culture mainly concerns itself with human subjective nature, modes, and attitudes of thinking and experiencing or roughly the way of life. For traditional Chinese intellectuals as well as civilians, culture means where human beings come from, how they shall behave themselves under the heaven and what mission they should finally accomplish in eternal harmony with heaven mandate. About the definition of culture in Chinese contexts, scholars often refer themselves to the harmonious combination between heaven the nature and human the spirituality revealed in *Yi Jing (The Book of Changes)*. In divinatory symbol “Bi” in Yi Jing, the explanation of the relations between heaven and human goes this way: “Heaven moves actively while earth coordinates passively, thus cosmos-harmony achieved, and modeling themselves after this heavenly pattern, human could achieve their appropriateness in social relations. The import of heaven is the cosmos-evolution materializing all beings, while the import of human is the awareness of all beings heavenly blessed.”³⁰ The English word Culture is exactly the combination of these two imports of heaven and human as Wen and Hua in Chinese, meaning humanity revealed in cosmos evolution. With this frame of the Integration between Heaven and Human, in contrast with the frame of Creator and his holy creatures in the west, we might gain better understanding for the cultural implications of heaven.

As we have explained the vogues of the Shang Dynasty were more religiously committed with sacrificial proprieties for heaven, but the Zhou Dynasty managed to alter the vogues with more human concerns for their social ethics. And this alteration also brought about the transformation of Ritual Performers to Confucian scholars in late the Zhou Dynasty, leaving Confucianism tinged with secular cultural imports. One of the chief imports, as Confucius believes, is its ethical merit: “When offering sacrifices to ancestors, one should behave as his ancestors

²⁸ Zhou Dunyi, “Volition (*zhi xue*),” in *Universal Scholarship (tong shu)* (Shanghai: Shanghai Classic Press, 1992), pp. 14–15.

²⁹ *Quotations from Zhang Zai*, see Feng Youlan, *The Complete Works of Three Pines Hall (sansongtang quanji)*, (Zhengzhou: Henan People’s Publishing House, 2000) Vol. 10, p. 135.

³⁰ Deng Qiubai, *The Book of Changes in Modern Chinese (baihua yijing)*, (Changsha: Yuelu Press, 1993), p. 273.

are truly enjoying the sacrifices; when offering sacrifices to gods, one should behave as gods are there enjoying their sacrifices.”³¹ The assumption of the souls of deceased ancestors is a cultural import as to imply the sense of gratitude for one’s life, the most important moral in Chinese heart-nature-mandate cosmology. The significance of this import was explained by Confucius in one of his most influential conversations with his disciples: “Zi Gong, one of Confucian devoted disciples, once asked if there exists the conscious soul of the dead.” Confucius expounded this way: “If I tell you that there exists the conscious soul of the dead, I have to worry about the committed descendents in much-engaged mourning detrimental to mourners; if I tell you that there does not exist the conscious soul of the dead, I also have to worry about the careless descendents who just leave their deceased elders in the wild. So Zi Gong, if you want to have definite answer for the physical existence of soul, you could naturally obtain it when your decease occurs.”³² For Chinese, human and his destiny is invariably associated with heaven mandate (*renmingguantian*), meaning that human obtains his life and meets his death is just at the mercy of heaven, and this seems to be a cultural consensus as the one “You were made from soil, and you will become soil again” in the Bible (Genesis 3: 19). When *The Book of Poetry* (*shijing*) says, “In the evolution motivated by heaven people are born with moral laws and things are made with natural laws, the moral laws for human intuitional reflection while natural laws for human rational reflection.” (*tianshenzhengmin, youwu youze, min zhi bingyi, haoshi yide*)³³ These lines were much eulogized by Confucius as to know Tian Dao (*zhidao*) and by Mencius to establish his theory on Goodness of Human Nature (*xingshanlun*). We might as well notice that both Confucius and Mencius did not give substantial and logical demonstration for their inference, yet they had strong faith in them. Much similar the case in Christian tradition, the substantial and logical demonstrations did not support the creation as to when, why and how it was accomplished, the affiliates of Christianity just have faith in it. For most Chinese habitually influenced by Confucianism the heavenly motivated evolution revealed the basic principle of ethics, that is human kindness (*ren*) or universal love, if not for this universal love heaven may not have motivated and initiated this moral evolution. That is the cultural import of this cosmos evolution, with which human should motivate and initiate from their heart a holy commitment as the maximum gratitude for their biological lives. That is the religious reason for Mencius’s heart-nature-mandate cosmology and also for the Chinese concept of culture. This reason, not rational and physical but cultural, is cherished by heart instead of mind when we frequently refer to these popular lines by Wang

³¹ Ba Yi, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, ba yi*).

³² Liu Xiang, *Classic Advices in Modern Chinese* (*baihua shuo yuan*), trans. by Qian Zongwu (Changsha: Yuelu Press, 1994), p. 507.

³³ Da Ya-Zheng Min, *The Book of Poetry* (*shijing, daya zhengmin*).

Yangming, the greatest Confucian scholar in the Ming Dynasty (A.D. 1368–1644), that “the merit of one’s daily life can be fully appreciated only by its association with heavenly motivated and initiated evolution.” (*bili riyong changxing nei, zhidao xiantian weihua qian*)³⁴ From the perspective of culture in Chinese term, the combination between cosmos evolution and its universal ethics is felt by human hearts rather logically demonstrated by human mind, heaven is morally richer and religiously kinder than a pure celestial body, its association with human heart transforming it into a moral heavenly mind. That is what Zhang Zai’s much cited motto “To testify a cosmic heart between heaven and earth” means to Chinese faith, as explained by Zhu Xi, the most prestigious Confucian scholar in the Song Dynasty, that “As physical entity heaven and earth can not speak, they have to invite saints to speak in their stead. If heaven and earth could speak themselves, they might have spoken better than those Saints.”³⁵ So most Chinese scholars, especially those adhering to Confucian tradition, would take it for granted that Saints with ready mind just interpreted what heaven had enlightened them rather than contributing by their own originality. They would think their own originality is characterized by a physical being, the predilection for rich food, and sensual pleasures, while heaven enlightens always with universal ethics for all beings in the eternal cosmos evolution. With this universal ethics, human beings could safely guard themselves from “acquiring their mentality just from flesh and blood” (*bucong qukeshang qinian*)³⁶ Therefore, we could see clearly heaven could not only safeguard human beings from their selfish sensual desires but also silently instruct them with universal ethics, without which heaven would not start this cosmos evolution by his self-motivated initiative. What Confucian scholars expect their Saints to speak in the service of heaven is to disseminate its universal ethics. So, Saints, in Confucian context, are thought to be gentlemen with perfect virtue in that they materialized the concept of the Integration between Heaven and Human.

So, the cultural implication of heaven is the essence of social ethics enlightened by heaven’s cosmos evolution and reflected by Saints transcending their biological temptations. This essence of social ethics is the orientation for a civilized society, the philosophy of life, and the ultimate expression of Chinese faith. It has been permeated, as desired by Confucian scholars, through each cell of human being. If a person, according to Mencius, is a social person with virtue, he should spontaneously be endowed with “four origins” (*siduan*), for without these origins he is not qualified to be a human, that is, “Without a passionate heart, he is not a person; without an ashamed heart, he is not a person; without a restrained heart, he is not a

³⁴ Wang Yangming, *The Complete Works of Wang Yangming* (*wangyangming quanji shang*), Vol. I, edit. by Wu Guang, Qian Ming, Dong Ping and Yao Yanfu, (Shanghai: Shanghai Classic Press, 1992), chapt. 20, p. 791.

³⁵ Zhu Xi, *Recorded Conversations of Zhu Xi* (*zhuzi yulei*), edit. by LiJingde, (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 1994), Vol. 65, p. 1612.

³⁶ Wang Yangming, *The Complete Works of Wang Yangming* (*wangyangming quanji shang*), Vol. I, edit. by Wu Guang, Qian Ming, Dong Ping and Yao Yanfu, (Shanghai: Shanghai Classic Press, 1992), chapt. 1, p. 31.

person; Without a reasonable heart, he is not a person. For a passionate heart we have the origin of human-kindness; for an ashamed heart we have the origin of justice; for a restrained heart we have the origin of proprieties; for a reasonable heart we have the origin of intelligence. A person is endowed with these four origins as much as his body with four limbs. And a person with these four origins behaves himself as they do not exist is one who manages to assassinate himself; if a monarch is said to have alienated from these four origins, his reputation is thus assassinated.”³⁷ Here, we can understand that “heart” in the context of heart-nature-mandate cosmology has been invested with cultural imports, it stresses the significance of reverent awe before the cosmos from human heart, the moral conscience from human mind and ceaseless vitality in heaven-mandated evolution. That is exactly what Lu Jiuyuan’s ingenious statements intend to convey, “The mission of the universe is one within a person, and the mission of a person is one within the universe,” so that “universe is not larger than my heart, and my heart is not smaller than universe.”³⁸ Human hearts, usually thought to be the sensible organs of emotional function, now take the form of human minds, the organs of rational function, in cultivating social ethics from the assumed value-free cosmos. This is what culture exactly means to Chinese Confucian scholars, for without this cultural merit, human beings are just marginalized as beasts in costumes (*yiguan qinshou*). Therefore, the mission of culture, that is, as Mencius put it “to comply with the mandate of heaven” (*li ming*). And the concept of culture here means the universal ethics, which can be further expounded as mega value commonly shared by all human beings and proposed by all religious traditions. I would thereby contribute the quotations of Lu Jiuyuan again to fortify my argument that “If a Saint were born in the East Sea, his heart and mind should be thus invested; if a Saint were born in the West Sea, his heart and mind should be thus invested; if a Saint were born in the Southern and Northern Seas, his heart and mind should also be thus invested. If a Saint had been born in the past by hundred or thousand generations, he could have been thus invested; if a Saint will be born in the future by hundred or thousand generations, he might also be thus invested.”³⁹ This argument of his is now popularized as “All human beings are common in hearts, and all human hearts are common in feeling considerably” (*ren tong ci xin, xin tong ci li*). So for Chinese, heart can be interpreted in two drastically different ways, a biologically selfish one and a universally ethical one. Confucian scholars are always advocating a start from selfish one and a terminal with ethical one. If a person takes the ethical heart as his life orientation, he is thus culturally established. Cheng Hao, another Confucian master scholar in the Song Dynasty, once

³⁷ Gongsun Chou Shang, *The Works of Mencius* (*mengzi, gongsunchou shang*).

³⁸ Lu Jiuyuan, “Chronological Biography (Nian Pu),” in *The Complete Works of Lu Jiuyuan* (*lujiuyuan ji*) (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 1980), Vol. 36, p. 483.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

succinctly summed up this by saying “A cultural heart leads directly to heaven” (*zhixin bianishi tian*).⁴⁰ To him the identity between human heart and heaven is the universal ethics, and Wang Yangming agreed with him by explaining the identity in two correlative perspectives: “Human heart is identical to heaven in that human heart can feel the essence of all beings under the heaven” (*Answering to Li Mingde*) and “human heart is identical to Dao, and Dao is identical to heaven, so to be conscious of one’s heart is to be conscious of Dao and thence to be conscious of heaven”.⁴¹ For the first perspective Wang emphasized the moral message of heaven bearing and blessing all beings, and for the second perspective Wang emphasized the dynamics of human heart feeling universal beats of all beings, foregrounding human conscience on universal love revealed in the heaven-mandated evolution.

In the context of Chinese scholarship, especially of Confucian tradition, culture is the sophisticated term for the Integration between Heaven and Human in that heaven authorizes its mandate for a cosmic evolution and human consciously realizes his holy mission as reflecting on this cosmic evolution. In the Song Dynasty, Confucianism was conspicuous for three schools of thought, namely *Li* (Rationality), *Xin* (Heart), and *Qi* (Substance) and notified for their master scholars of Zhu Xi, Lu Jiuyuan, and Zhang Zai respectively. For Zhu Xi, the human heart will be integrated into cosmic dynamics only when “human consciously expands his heart to its maximum then he can really appreciate the truth of heaven in cosmic evolution, a truth universally self-evident and self-realized.”⁴² For Lu Jiuyuan, *Li* or rationality is not something objectively exhibited in the cosmic evolution as Zhu Xi assumes, rather it is rooted at each individual heart and subjectively dynamic in apprehending the reasons for things to exist. He insists that “What is common for all human beings is their hearts, what is common for all human hearts is their intelligence to reason, what is common for human intelligence is its potential to fully explore the reasons of all beings, what is common for full rational exploration is its maximized faculty of heart.”⁴³ And his successor Wang Yangming made it simpler and directer that “human heart is the origin of heaven.” (*renxin shi tianyuan*) From their different investigations into the relation between heart and heaven we could tell the schools between Li and Xin, one focusing on the objective of truth of heaven while one on the subjective dynamics of heart. Distanced himself from both Li and Xin, Zhang Zai engages himself in the exploration of Qi, the cosmic substance. He is quoted as saying “Whatever is

⁴⁰ Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi, *The Posthumous Works of Cheng Brothers* (*er cheng yishu*) (Shanghai: Shanghai Classic Press, 1992), Vol. 2, I, p. 17.

⁴¹ See Zhang Dainian, *The Complete Works of Zhang Dainian* (Shijiazhuang: Hebei People’s Press, 1996) Vol. 4, p. 475.

⁴² See Feng Youlan, *The Complete Works of Three Pines Hall* (*sansongtang quanji*), (Zhengzhou: Henan People’s Publishing House, 2000), Vol. 10, p. 20.

⁴³ Lu Jiuyuan, “Letters, to Li Zai,” in *The Complete Works of Lu Jiuyuan* (*lujiuyuan ji*) (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 1980), Vol. 11, p. 149.

physically observable is being, whatever is being is phenomenon, and whatever is phenomenon is the air”⁴⁴ So, we may reconcile the conflicts between Li and Xin in Zhang Zai’s conclusion: “From the cosmic immensity we acquire the name of heaven, from the evolution based on cosmic substance we acquire the name of Dao, from the combination between cosmic immensity and cosmic substance we acquire the name of universal nature, from the combination between universal nature and human conscience we acquire the name of heart.”⁴⁵ He approaches Dao and Li, cosmic immensity and heaven identically, so rationality and heart are both endowed with cosmic feature, and “cosmic immensity means Qi by essence” (*taixu jiqi*) in agreement with his cosmic substance theory. For him, culture means acknowledgment of cosmic substance, neither objective Li nor rationality leading to confused concepts of natural law or moral law, nor subjective Xin or heart leading to confused concepts of individual heart or universal heart. And with this cosmic substance, we could obtain a disinterested concept of Being, the unified entity for a whole universe. Despite their differences in Li, Xin and Qi, these three schools of thought are all assorted as the subordinate branches of Dao, namely Tian Dao, so they all are called master scholars of Dao (*daoxue xiansheng*) and their scholarship the learning of Dao (*daoxue*). Approaching the cosmic evolution mandated by heaven, Li school of thought focuses its investigation on the objective law in the universe, with particular interest in the cardinal human moral laws of kindness, justice, appropriateness, intelligence and honor (*ren yi li zhi xin*) blessed as human cultural merits by cosmic evolution. Xin school of thought commits itself to intuitional faith that each individual heart can feel the passionate love of the cosmic evolution, thus advocating every human being is a Saint by heart. Qi school of thought proposes that the true reality in the universe is the substance, basic element for cosmic evolution which exhibits universal harmony of its own accord. Here, the three most influential schools of thought are distinctively demonstrative of their cultural approaches which combine the human evaluation (*wen*) and the cosmic evolution (*hua*), correlated them into an English entry culture (*wenhua*). Another more popular term to denote culture in Chinese is Heaven reveals holy rules, and human performs fairly by these rules (*tianjing diyi*). With these introductions and analysis, now we may be culturally easier to conclude that the ultimate concern for Chinese faith system is to establish all-dimensional harmony between nature and human.

⁴⁴ Zhang Za, “Divine Evolution, Cosmological Enlightenment (*zheng meng, qian cheng*)”, in *The Works of Zhang Zai* (*zhangzai ji*) (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 1978), p. 63.

⁴⁵ Zhang Zai, “Critique of Folly, Cosmic Harmony (*zheng meng, tai he*)”, in *The Works of Zhang Zai* (*zhangzai ji*) (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 1978), p. 9.

Conclusion

As a conclusion I am fully aware the reasonable suspicion why the concept of heaven should be purposely marked out for the key concept of Chinese faith system since this system comprises Daoism and Chinese Buddhism. Does the concept of heaven in Confucian tradition harmonize with the key concepts of Daoism and Chinese Buddhism? We certainly know that the key concept of Daoism is Dao while Chinese Buddhism has Dharma as its key concept. But when we examine comprehensively the essentials of these three traditions, we are more comfortable to concede that the concept of heaven in Confucian tradition furnishes with larger capacity as to accommodate academic messages in the disciplines of evolution, religion, philosophy, politics, ethics, theology, law, and psychology, which Dao and Dharma could equally share much in common, and their similar academic messages could also be basically expressed in the concept of heaven in Confucian tradition. The approach to the relations between Confucianism and Daoism as well as Chinese Buddhism in the principle of “seeking unity in diversity” (*qiutong cunyi*) could properly explain the roughly harmonious existence of these three traditions in the form of unified Chinese faith system, known as the Unity of Three Traditions (*sanjiaoheyi*).

I should also make it clear that there have been some reflections from narrow-minded and egomaniac stance to exclude any messages other than Confucianism into this concept of heaven, dogmatically confining themselves in Confucian tradition only. Huang Zongxi, an originative thinker and a versatile scholar in the Ming Dynasty, once criticized the distorted faith on heaven from some Confucian scholars as the following: “*Confucian tenet focuses on Heaven while Buddhist on Heart* and this has been the self-evident truth. Since the observation was made by Cheng Yi, the master scholar in the Song Dynasty, it has been benefiting Confucian school a great deal. But my reflection and rectification goes further as to say that the merit of heaven lies in its appropriateness to human, and the merit of heart lies in its initiative rather than its transcendent emptiness. Therefore I should offend his reputation to say that Cheng Yi is too quick to comment about the merit of Confucianism and the demerit of Chinese Buddhism. Although the distinction made between Confucianism and Chinese Buddhism this way disclosed the narrow-mindedness of Chinese Buddhism, yet it also spoiled the value of Confucianism itself.”⁴⁶ We may refer from the mild criticism of Huang Zongxi that Cheng Yi had not been able to see the interrelation between Confucianism and Chinese Buddhism at the time Indian Buddhism was being introduced and transformed into one agreeable to Confucianism and Daoism, namely Chinese Chan Buddhism. But Cheng Yi’s successors were able to see it clearly, the historians of Chinese philosophy in the period of the late Ming and early Qing

⁴⁶ Huang Zongxi, “Teachers, Biographies of Luo Qinshun (*shi shuo, luoqinshun*),” in *Biographies of Confucian Scholars in the Ming Dynasty* (*mingru xue an*), reversed edition, (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 1985), Vol. 1, p. 10.

Dynasties, like Huang Zongxi and Quan Zuwang, would contribute the description of “Confucian scholars could have been able to fully appreciate the merits of their own six-classics only after ten years of engaging themselves in the traditions of Daoism and Buddhism” (*chu ru yu fo lao zhe shu shi nian, fan qiu zhu liu jing er hou de zhi*) to the biographies of them in the category of Dao Scholarship.⁴⁷ In addition to this observation, we have many unified expression between Confucianism and Daoism, and between Confucianism and Chinese Chan Buddhism in the Song and Ming Dynasties, most notably “Zhu Xi savors somewhat of Daoism while Lu Jiuyuan Chan Buddhism” (*zhuzi dao, luzi chan*). Like the saying all roads lead to Rome, Confucianism, Daoism, and Chinese Buddhism are the three chief roads leading to Chinese faith system, to which more travelers have their spiritual journey by Confucianism with the concept of heaven covering the largest common sphere of thoughts in the three correlative traditions. Within the unified body of Chinese faith system, heaven can be coherently associated with Dao as Tian Dao, Dao can be logically linked with Li as Dao Li, and heaven can be morally accepted as the last resort of heart as Tian Liang, and if we extend the concept of Dao to Daoism and heart to Chinese Buddhism, we would not be perplexed at all by focusing heaven as the key concept of Chinese faith system.

A reflection on the concept of heaven by Jin Yuelin, the most influential logician and epistemologist in contemporary China, goes this: “If we interpret heaven as a natural celestial body from one perspective as well as a willed God manipulating the nature from another perspective, emphasizing one interpretation in this circumstance or another interpretation in that circumstance, we are possibly sensing the true message the very Chinese entry conveys.”⁴⁸ With the concept of heaven in the structure of Chinese scholarship, we might also be free from being confused and perplexed when reading the commentaries about Chinese scholarship or faith system either as religion from western Jesuits, or as nothing more than social ethical doctrines from western philosophy-oriented Hegel, or as philosophy of life from Feng Youlan, or as moral religion from Mou Zongsan. They all have their reasons for such commentaries both historically and sentimentally. For modern Jesuits, who had their religious mission in China, they found in the concept of heaven much similar messages as attributed to the creator in their own faith tradition, so they agreed with their Chinese Confucian scholars that Confucianism was a religion. For philosopher Feng Youlan, who lived in the time when modern enlightenment thinkers had severely criticized religion-monopolized Dark Ages in Europe and Marxism-oriented contemporary China also repudiated religion as negative ideology, Confucianism could be culturally inherited and further enriched by defining it non-religious as to avoid being abolished by Marxist ideology. But for Mou Zongsan, a culturally exiled philosopher who dreamed to rehabilitate the

⁴⁷ See Feng Youlan, *The Complete Works of Three Pines Hall* (*sansongtang quanji*) (Zhengzhou: Henan People’s Publishing House, 2000), Vol. 10, pp. 641–642.

⁴⁸ See Feng Youlan, *The Short History of Chinese Philosophy* (Beijing: Beijing University Press, 1985), p. 226.

glory and self-confidence of China from the alienated Marxist ideology, Confucianism had been religion to sustain Chinese for more than 2,000 years. And for those scholars who have been engaging themselves in the arguments for or against Confucianism as religion are pragmatically oriented: if Chinese leading ideology defines religion as negative and reactionary, they insist that Confucianism is rather a national spiritual tradition than a religion; if Chinese leading ideology becomes positively tolerant with religion they assure that Confucianism is a religion of Chinese character. But for those radical Chinese Marxists Confucianism has been religion of torturing and devouring human beings (*chiren de lijiao*). So we can tell, from the domain of political and academic discourse, that Confucianism or rather the Chinese faith system including Daoism and Chinese Buddhism, has been defined in the various disciplines of Western academic discourse, being ridiculed as feeling an elephant by the blind. Then comes the challenge: Is there any other way of approaching Chinese culture or tradition than the one from western perspective? Whitehead's observation on western philosophy as footnotes to Plato really reminds me of heaven as the key concept to rescue scholars from this intellectual mire. Heaven, similar to Plato's Form or Idea, or Good, provides us with a metaphysical or transcendent Being subordinate to which all physical beings in concrete or particular disciplines can thus be analyzed and explained. For Chinese, heaven can be both metaphysical and transcendent, depending on their shades of rational or emotional feature. And if we take it as the key concept for Chinese faith system, it should certainly be richer and wider than what I have been discussing.

Chapter 5

The Religious Commitment of Confucian Style

Introduction

Religious commitment is an emotive acknowledgement and life pursuit for the authoritative resource of value or the ultimate concern for human faith. In the western tradition this commitment is frequently depicted as experiencing the notions of all-existing truth, goodness, and beauty whereas in the Chinese Confucian tradition it is constantly estimated as integration of the mysterious cosmos and mundane human beings. The very integration of Confucianism embodies the spiritual field in which all existent beings in the universe are coordinating in the rules of benevolence, innateness, and rationality. The Chinese Confucians are devoted to these rules as if they were the “Onto” of all universal beings and committed their lives to the sacrifice of this onto. They persuade themselves into conviction that by doing this they are just performing the holy duties designated for their cosmos. Obviously, we do not see organizational religion and human–god worship in Confucian tradition, yet Confucians do express their religious commitments by affiliating themselves whole-heartedly to grand mundane ethical ideas seen as the mysterious onto of the universe.

Confucian Humaneness (*ren*) as the Ultimately Real

In various religious traditions, believers are extremely devoted to a kind of “Ultimately Real” as the kernel of their religious faiths. This kernel covers the scope of the concept of God vehemently demonstrated by St. Anselm and St. Thomas Aquinas as well as the expression of Ultimate Concern by Paul Tillich and the Ultimately Real by John Hick. For religious persons both the personal deities or gods of traditional beliefs and the transcendent concepts of modern theologians are the cosmological supremacy of evolutionary universe and the moral

origin of human spiritual creation. These transcendent beings are responsible not only for the worldly miracles but also for the ethical orientation of the universe.

Thanks to the absolute authorities dedicated to these transcendent beings either as universe builders or as moral supervisors, we do not consider it a definite necessity to demonstrate rationally the existence of these holy beings except that we should devote our passionate commitments to them. And such commitment may be identified as religious commitments.

The kernel of Chinese Confucian tradition is *Ren* (humaneness) or *Li* (universal principle) which may be traced to its metaphysical ultimate as *Tianming* (fate designed by Heaven) or *Tianli* (highest principle decreed by Heaven); Either *Tianming* or *Tianli* manifested in *Ren* or *Li* can be matched to the Ultimately Real cherished by modern western theologians. They may not have clearly stated their respect toward *Tianming* or *Tianli* as religiously committed feelings, yet the Chinese Confucian scholars do show their devout loyalties to *Tianming* and filial obedience to the Universe as the greatest ancestor. Such attitude toward *Tianming* is the very religious commitment of Confucian style. Usually, *Tianming* for them is not consecrated as the holiest personal deity or god, but rather a sacred concept of transcendence, which sustains them in ridding of all mundane fragilities such as weak flesh, age decline, poverty, distress, sickness, and death as well as in resisting all mundane temptations. By adhering to *Tianming* Confucian scholars may reach their total self-realization in the moral realm. In *The Doctrine of The Mean* (*Zhong Yong* or Principle of the Mean), we have these statements: what Heaven confers is called the nature. The following of this nature is called the Way (*Dao*). The cultivation of this Way is called spiritual culture. In Zhang Zai's works we have four sentences cited as spiritual mottoes: "To testify a cosmic heart between heaven and earth, to vindicate the heaven's mandate for all human beings, to accomplish the scholarship of ancient Saints and to bring about universal harmony for future generations."¹ These are the spheres of mind nursed at the hearts of traditional Confucians, indicating the metaphysical breakthrough from ancient religion to moral philosophy. This tendency toward the Ultimately Real instead of personal deity even began from what Karl Jaspers called the Axial Age and in due sense may not be considered a religious tradition. Before the existentialists in the West advocated the concepts of ultimate concern for religiosity, all theologians had devoted their academic zest to a personal deity. In this respect, traditional Confucian thoughts have much less in common with western religious thoughts. But then we have the Danish existentialist Soren Kierkegaard who saw truth as subjectivity to the negligence of the orthodox God as a wholly other. This dramatic turn from personal deity to believers' subjective feeling in religious experience offers valuable insights into reevaluating the religious merits of Chinese traditional Confucianism. By now we are more optimistic about this deep-rooted consciousness of *Tianming* in Confucianism for its peculiarities of religious commitment. Within this academic

¹ Quotations from Zhang Zai, see Feng Youlan, *The Complete Works of Three Pines Hall* (*sansongtang quanji*), (Zhengzhou: Henan People's Publishing House, 2000) Vol. 10, p. 135.

frame we may easily come to the point when we read Confucius declaring that he is chosen by Heaven as your master of virtue, Mencius dreaming of becoming an aristocrat by divine Heaven, Lu Jiuyuan believing that his mind is that of the universe, and vice versa, Wang Fuzhi dedicating that he is obliged to assume a new perspective for Confucian classics and without fulfilling that holy mission he shall be executed by Heaven, Cheng Yinke insisting that his scholarship is corresponding to the will of Heaven, Liang Shuming boasting that if he dies the sky will change its color and history its rout and Feng Youlan proposing that the highest stage that a person may pursue is the stage of Heaven. These are famous scholars of Confucian style in Chinese history. They constitute the most admiring heroes as Chinese saints whose sense of holy mission for human beings is inspired to its fullest extent by their religious commitments.

Moral Facet in Blood Ties

In line with the faith logic of Confucian Integration between Heaven and Human, all beings in nature including human beings are the products of the evolution of the goodwill of heaven. Therefore parents, as passionately intimate “heaven”, were the immediately and intuitively apprehended reality that all children should worship as blood-tied gods, the relative religious commitments thus being frequently revealed when children sighed at the death of the parents as “my heaven is falling down” (*wo de tian ta liao*). Likewise, heaven is accountable for all things under it as the offspring of its universal kindness in Confucian tradition. Therefore, the conviction of “repaying for other’s generosity” (*zhi en tu bao*) has been accepted as universal ethic in a Confucian society, theoretically illustrated in Chinese intellectuals as “The universe has rendered such a gorgeous space that its sacred doctrine permeates all visible corners” (*langlang qiankun, tianli zhaozhang*). Yet, when we associate this universal ethic with each individual life, we cannot avoid connecting it to the family context where holy “generosity” has been evidencing itself in the innate blood ties children derive from their parent and then to grandparent and finally to heaven and earth. In this biological chain, an individual life may appear to be secular, but it is traceable invariably to the ultimate origin of all human lives, like Adam being the common ancestor of all human descendents in Christian tradition, and thus the secularity of life and the sanctity of ultimate origin of life are integrated. When Chinese faith is characterized by the proposition of the integration between heaven and human (*tianren heyi*), its central tenet is apprehended in daily lives where every family member performs the holy mission to enhance and maintain the graces of his family, his clan, his country, and this human world in the long run, making every family member a clergyperson and every house a church in Chinese style.

Once, Cheng Yi, the younger of the Cheng brothers, illustrated that “universal nature and human destiny in the world are identical to the filial piety in the household, therefore in the filial piety one can demonstrate his cosmic commitments to universal nature and human destiny. Even doing household chores like

sweeping the courtyard and hosting visitors can reveal the messages of universal nature and human destiny. In the integration between heaven and human, there can be no distinction between metaphysical entity and physical beings.”² In his logic, filial piety is the universal ethic reflected in the household, being the “heavenly mandates” human beings most frequently refer to and intimately affiliate with in their daily lives. Such unity between secular life and sacred doctrine was so enthralling to Confucian scholars in the Song Dynasty that it motivated them to edit an essay from the Book of Rites (*lijì*) as an independent classic focusing on the relation between heavenly mandate and human nature in the very beginning of the essay: “The universal nature has been destined by heaven’s mandate, to attest this universal nature is to apply Dao or cosmological dynamics, to inculcate Dao is to carry out education. What can be called Dao is imminent in everything, otherwise it can not be Dao.” This statement played a vital role in the shift of focus in the national service examination based on Confucian classics from the Five Classics (*wujing*) in the Han and Tang Dynasties to the Four Books (*sishu*) in the Song Dynasty, simply because it accentuated the aspect of “nature-mandate scholarship” in Confucian tradition, i.e., the religious facet of Chinese national faith. An American scholar, Herbert Fingarette, entitled his book *The Secular as Sacred* as a catchphrase to expound what the Chinese termed the integration between heaven and human might succinctly reveal. This may explain, to a greater extent, why the Chinese have a predilection for heaven when they worship their ancestor. In their faith for heavenly mandate, their past ancestors’ spirit in heaven is assumed to protect their offspring upon their earthly prayers.

This earthly prayer and heavenly blessing from their past ancestors constitute a life community which has transformed the blood ties of a household into a holy media between heaven and human, ensuring not only the continuation of human physical life but also the sacred protections from heaven, hence bonding the heavenly doctrine and human destiny together in the form of a mandate. To echo such a mandate, every member, especially the male one in a household, is obliged to marry in order to produce offspring or to maintain “the eternal fire of the household” (*xianghuo*), consecrating a mundane life into the heaven blessed eternity of life. When the Chinese get married, the most popular blessing from other family members or friends is: “wish you love each other to the time till you grow white hair”, or “wish your marriage continue as long as the life of heaven and earth”, or “wish you give birth to babies as early as possible” and “wish your family has a rich household and prosperous business.” A religious commitment to a prolific and eternal life helps cultivate a prevalent form of worship for heaven and ancestor (*jingtian jizu*), through which Confucian scholars would avail themselves to attest the holiness of secular life and a sense of gratitude for such a most gorgeous gift from heaven to human life. Although the worship of heaven

² Zhu Xi, Lu Zuqian and Jiang Yong, “Annotations to Current Reflections (*jinsilu jizhu*),” in *The Four Categories in Chinese Cultural Essentials* (*sibu jingyao*) (Shanghai: Shanghai Classic Press, 1993), Vol. 12, Chapt. 6, p.1166.

and ancestor in the Chinese tradition does not bear the sense of biology and archeology as western positivists would demand, yet the very faith and its relative rituals are sufficient enough to express their gratitude to the life harbor or the family where life is donated by heaven as the most invaluable gift even if heaven and our ancestor have been immensely distant from our physical lives. In other words, the blood ties formed in the family context testify to the importance of each individual mundane life and their sanctity in the eternity of genealogical ties. As early as in the Han Dynasty 2000 years back, the most influential historian Sima Qian accurately depicted this cosmological sanctity in individual fragility: “Heaven is the beginning of Man, while father and mother are the source of human life. Emotionally when man is thrown at the end of his power and wit he will invariably trace back to his beginning and source for psychological comfort. So we intuitively shout out for Heaven when we are stuck out of a sudden, we cry out for parent when we are hurt physically to the extreme.”³ In his illustration, the relation between heaven and human was visibly depicted as a religious one, implying human nature with a sense of religion in the form of tracing back to life’s earliest origin for man’s deepest spiritual solace. His observation fortifies the religious functions that a household used to bear to sustain all kinds of hardships in binding clan members and reminding them of their holy missions as a social ethical prerequisite. In the frame of the integration between heaven and human as well as worship for heaven and ancestor, Chinese affiliates are so delicate as to transform physically formidable challenges into spiritual opportunities blessed by heavenly masters and their ancestor’s spirits. What has been normally termed as religious solace of spirituality was discussed and believed by Chinese Confucian scholars and their followers as “justifying oneself by heavenly mandate” (*anshen liming*).

Sanctity in Natural Evolution

As we all know, Christianity by essence is a faith system of bilateral distinction, i.e., God as the creator and universal beings as creature. In this bilateral distinction, the absolute otherness symbolized by God immutably occupies the supreme position, leaving human beings and the natural world at the mercy of his omnipresent miracles. In the narration in the bible this Creator, God, brought about everything in the universe including us human beings with “original sin” and his miracles. Also, God drove off human beings from the Garden of Eden, and additionally God was also believed to have created a deluge to punish the offspring of Adam, though this was atoned by his salvation at doomsday. These are the

³ Sima Qian *Historical Records (shiji)*, “Biographies of Qu Yuan and Jia Sheng” (*quyuan jiasheng liezhuan*) in *The Twenty-Four Histories*, (Version of Simplified Chinese) (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 2000) Vol. 84, p. 1933.

miracles of “absolute otherness” designated as God’s omnipotence which human beings could do nothing to alleviate or avoid but to awe in fear of his absolute power. The logic in this context reveals that the faith toward their God from his believers is established by terror of holy penalty or sacred mercy, and even the salvation from paradise or eternal torture at inferno in the extreme. In its negative sense, people believe in Christianity basically due to their confessions to the original sin for fear of being rejected into hell. Contrarily, in the Confucian faith system the universe originated in the heavenly mandate out of universal ethic instead of miraculous divinity and all physical beings emerge and grow harmoniously with cosmic evolution instead of omnipotent and omnipresent creation. All physical beings in the world under heaven including its most sentient human beings are partaking in the holy evolution of the universe in the mode of Confucian cosmic dynamics. This is what “the universal nature has been destined by heaven’s mandate” (*tianming zhi wei xing*) prioritizes in its first sentence as the thematic statement in *the Doctrine of the Mean*. All physical beings are justified by their universal nature in the eternal process of evolution and these are the exemplifications of holy omnipresence fairly equal to all existents, expounding the sacredness and the subjectivity of natural beings as well as the intrinsic value of human beings as part of the natural world. Thereupon, Confucians incline to vest all natural beings under heaven with the sanctity of heavenly mandate, facilitating its dynamics in cosmic evolution in a very popular yet vivid image of person as a small cosmos or cosmos as a giant person. The identity of human intrinsic subjectivity with the sanctity of heaven convinces everything in the universe of its natural rights in the prototype of Zhang Zai, one of the most influential Confucian scholars in the Song Dynasty, in his much quoted catchphrase “all human beings of the same blood and flesh, and all natural beings of the equal capacity and entity (*minbao wuyu*).” And this is exactly the doctrinal faith in *The Book of Changes*, the arch-masterpiece of all Confucian classics (*qunjing zhi shou*), as it is proposed “What a prodigious universe it is! It just gives rise to all beings their existence,” “cosmological evolution gives rise to each natural being its nature and life,”⁴ “The heaven symbolizes the male while the earth the female; the heaven thus initiates and the earth accomplishes all natural beings.”⁵ These doctrinal descriptions about human life and natural beings in their origin and justification revealed both the sacred principles of the heavenly mandates and the subjectivity of physical beings including human in their own initiatives. This cosmology in mode of evolution may parallel itself congenially to the birth of a baby in the household life, implying the coalescence uniting human biological traits with conceptual holiness in life. Furthermore, the subjectivity of each individual life has been focused in the cosmic evolution which otherwise is being subjectively interpreted. The biological union between male and female in the perspective of the cosmic process was thus extolled in repudiation against the intercourse for

⁴ Wenyan, Qian Gua, *The Book of Changes* (*zhouyi, qiangua wenyan*).

⁵ Xi Ci Xia, *The Book of Changes* (*zhouyi, xici xia*).

mere sexual pleasures which has been consecrating household lives rather than being celibate in the western church.

We have another similar theoretical interpretation about the ethical cosmology in *the Doctrine of the Mean*. When we compare the opening sentence in *the Doctrine of the Mean* with the Genesis in the Bible, it could be easier to tell the subjective traits of individual life in the Confucian faith. The coherence proposed in “the universal nature has been destined by heaven’s mandate” and “in the unity between cosmological entity and harmony heaven and earth are distinguished with their respective faculties, which hatch out and nurse up every physical beings”, and “to attest this universal nature is to apply Dao or cosmological dynamics, to inculcate Dao is to carry out education” is obvious in motivating human beings in their own making and cultivating whatever is valuable in a substantial way. Human mundane fragility and heavenly eternal sacredness progress together in the cosmic evolution and this partaking convincingly tells what sacred heavenly mandate can represent in most sentient beings, i.e., human beings as the physical agents of heavenly cosmic mission, expressive of the religious commitment of Confucian integration between heaven and human. Therefore, Confucian conviction on “nature-mandate” does function as a catalyst to human nature for initiating and self-realizing his independent value instead of passive superstition toward other alienated powers. Such conviction associated with social dedications can help us to apprehend Mencius in his “being good by nature” (*xingshan lun*) and charismatic “great husband” (*dazhangfu*) in “who won’t be seduced to being obscenely rich, who won’t give in because of being poor and plebeian, who won’t reconcile himself to coercion”, Lu Jiuyuan in his cosmic personality of “the mission of the universe is one within a person, and the mission of a person is one within the universe,” so that “universe is not larger than my heart, and my heart is not smaller than universe” and Wang Yangming in his “human being embodies the cosmic heart.” These are the expressions and witnesses of the subjective value in Confucian integration between heaven and human, through which the heavenly sanctity can be fully demonstrated, and this may adequately echo the Confucian scholars in the Song Dynasty in “if Confucius were not incarnated by Heaven’s Mandate, human history would just remain in dark” (*tian bu sheng zhongni, wan gu ru changye*). In contrast, Christianity has been bereft of this human subjectivity; in consequence human salvation has to be at the mercy of divine Incarnation and the Jesus Crucifixion. In Christianity, Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross leaves agape nothing short of best anticipation, but the subjectivity and initiative of humans was equally sacrificed by his holy salvation. Therefore the subjective value of humans engaged Nietzsche in his proclamation “God has died, his death showing his mercy for human,” for his assumed death leaves room for human being to initiate his own subjectivity and creativity.

In the Chinese faith system heavenly divinity would not be vindicated independent of human subjectivity and originality, relieving the Chinese largely of idolatry, dogma, ritual, paradise, and hell in their self-realization. The ignorance of these “subjective constraints” has a disguised facility in prompting their subjectivity and creativity. Western people tend to think that the Chinese are so dedicated to

secular undertakings that Confucianism as the main source for their spirituality does not merit the definition of a “transcendent religion”. Yet, if they come to understand the cosmology and axiology implied in Confucian integration between heaven and human, and its sacredness of “accomplishing heaven’s mandates” in their household’s “cleaning house and greeting guests”, they may be able to reconcile their suspicion with the ultimate concern of the Chinese style in the proposition “cosmological doctrine incarnated on all physical beings” To Confucian scholars humans have been consecrated as “the conscience of all beings between heaven and earth”, which can be paralleled to “a cosmic heart” (*yuzhou zhi xin*) feeling and motivating what family, country and world in a harmonious and sustainable way. As the spiritual roots in a life community constituted of family, country, and world, the human conscience physically transcends his biological blood pump in the image of “a cosmic heart”, distinguishing an intrinsic human subjectivity from an extrinsic Creator as “the absolute otherness” in the Christian tradition. In their pursuit of perfect faith, “heaven” above human heads is more often internalized into human heart in a popular entry of “heavenly conscience” (*tianliang*) with its spatial height eclipsed by human moral consciousness. Zhu Xi, one of the Confucian pioneers of Cheng and Zhu Scholarship (*chengzhu lixue*) concisely interpreted the relation between heaven and human that “As physical entity heaven and earth can not speak, they have to invite saints to speak in their stead.”⁶ This Confucianism is accepted by Chinese people in the statement “saints as the moral agent of the Heaven” (*shengren daitian liyan*), and since Confucian saints act as prophets to enlighten ordinary people of their heavenly blessed nature, “everyone in the street is a saint” (*manjie doushi shengren*) by partaking of heavenly divine mandates. Therefore the faith for heavenly mandate proposed in Confucianism has been justifying Chinese people in their moral conscience and social responsibilities, a conspicuous mentality attesting human subjectivity and creativity juxtaposed with “Jesus Incarnation” and “doomsday salvation” outsourced for God rather than human himself. The Confucian religious commitments would even go to the extreme that the human being ceases to be dignified deprived of his subjectivity and creativity, and any curse would be less worse than “depravity of heavenly conscience” (*sangjin tianliang*) and “moral corruption to its core” (*liangzhi minmie*) in Confucian tradition, thus prioritizing the ethical sense before biological entities for human beings. Lu Jiuling, the elder brother of Lu Jiuyuan who was credited as the pioneer thinker of “Lu and Wang Heart Scholarship” (*luwangxinxue*) in the Song Dynasty, commented on this “cosmic heart” or universal conscience as “all our saints have been identified by this cosmic heart” (*gusheng xiangchuan zhi ci xin*), which was echoed by Wang Yangming in the Ming Dynasty in an explicit phrase “conscience is innate human faculty to tell evil from good” (*zhishan zhi e shi liangzhi*). These messages constitute the criteria for moral evaluation which grounded human subjectivity and heavenly divinity. The conscience of human awareness is the representation of “a cosmic

⁶ *Recorded Conversations of Zhu Xi* (*zhuzi yulei*), edit. by Li Jingde, (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 1994), Vol. 65, p. 1612.

heart”, insinuating human ethics being universal and revealing a deep-rooted conviction that the loss of cosmic heart for the human being would invalidate his accommodation in the universe as such. In the long run, the religious logic and commitments in Confucian tradition expressed in “Heaven-Mandated-Nature Theory” (*tiandao xingmin guan*) do expose themselves to socially maximum fairness and human subjectivity and creativity. To think of the proposition that “heaven makes judgment only via the eyes and ears of the people” (*tianshi zi wominshi, tainting zi wominting*), and the moral and holy axioms revealed in the heavenly mandates in Confucian tradition can reasonably and intuitively incorporate themselves into the democracy, fairness, and harmony in the mental currency of modern society.

Religious Commitments Ensuring Social Ethics

The Confucian religious commitments reflect the spirit of the highest motivation for the universe since their pursuit of individual realization is stimulated by Tianming or the cosmological order. With divine inspiration from Heaven the human cultivation of Confucian scholars remains a constant process to aim at being perfect. As Zhou Dunyi puts it, the life process of Confucian scholars is one from being intellectual to being gentleman, from being gentleman to being saint, from being saint to being integrated with Heaven. And this process is defined by him as the establishment of the loftiest humanity.

Apart from being involved in individual realization, Confucian religious commitments may also play a positive role in promoting the ethos by superseding self-realization above community politics. According to Confucius, if a person aims high and seeks for transcendent value than material welfare, the community will follow his example by popularizing the principle that it is easier to be a conqueror of a marshal with an army than a civilian with iron will. Traditional Chinese society also cherishes the idea by Mencius that emperors should remain pupil-hood with the Confucian saints. When relating to emperors, he is quoted as saying that by political power I dare not to be your friend but by morality you may not be qualified to be my friend. Morality stands much higher than political power by the criteria of Heaven. Dong Zhongshu, a very important philosopher in the Han Dynasty, also intended to curb the political power of the emperors by advocating the Integration between Heaven and Human, his logical being that Heaven as the perfect morality should be respected as absolute authority over all powers on earth so that we may see the social and political equality before Heaven or morality. These are the reasons that many monks in the Wei and Jin Dynasties did not show much respect to their emperors and some scholars in the Tang Dynasty preferred to be death-braving admonishers to their emperors.

Finally, we may discuss the association between religious commitments and environmental ethics. We may read from *The Doctrine of the Mean*, the Confucian Classic, that “It is only he who has the perfect cosmic dynamics (*cheng*) who can

develop his nature to the utmost. Being able to do this he is able to do the same to the nature of other men. Being able to do this he is able to do the same to the nature of things. Being able to do this he can assist the transforming and nourishing operations of Heaven and Earth. Being able to do this, he can form a trinity with Heaven and Earth.” We understand from this statement that both human beings and other universal beings are created equally by Heaven with the same vitality. Human beings cannot fully appreciate their merits as living creatures unless they hold all other creatures or universal beings in greatest respect. This is the sphere of mind described as understanding, serving, pleasing, and becoming the Heaven or our moral God. Zhou Dunyi wrote a phrase that “never cutting the green under his window, which shows his awareness that all plants are just like human beings with their respective lives and ethics.”⁷ Confucian scholars would examine the destruction of any natural beings as abusing the morality of Heaven since all beings are carriers of the cosmological spirit of vitality. Despite its mystic mood in explaining environmental ethics, Confucian scholars did expect a maximum harmony between human and nature.

⁷ See Feng Youlan(Fung Yu-lan), *The Complete Works of Three Pines Hall* (*sansongtang quanji*) (Zhengzhou: Henan People’s Press, 2000), Vol. 10. p. 65.

Chapter 6

Religious Aspects of Daoism

Daoism as Indigenous Religion in China

Dao (*dao* or *tao*) is a master-word in Chinese, being metaphysically universal in its diversified scope of concepts from heavenly doctrine (*tiandao*) to knack (*mendao*), thus making me extremely reluctant to say it is the word next to God in the Chinese context. When Chinese intellectual tradition is symbolically depicted as the unity of three doctrines (*sanjiao*), it can be comprehensively perceived both as philosophy and religion in either of Confucianism, Daoism, and Chinese Buddhism. Here, I specifically expose Daoism to its religious aspects, moderately complemented by its philosophical tradition and its relations with Confucianism and Buddhism.

Among the five officially acknowledged religions in China, Daoist religion (or simply Daoism, *daojiao*) is the only one indigenous to China, dissimilar to other religions either as a totally western style or as intrinsically adapted, like Chinese Buddhism and Chinese Hui Muslim (*huijiao*). It has been a spiritual companion to Chinese culture and folk faith for nearly 2000 years, echoing in great depth Chinese mentality, national attributes, and lifestyles and many scholars would therefore refer all these essentials to the catchphrase: “The spiritual root of Chinese culture has been deep in religious Daoism”.¹

The term religious Daoism first appeared in the later years of the Han Dynasty, conventionally acknowledged as Daoism from Huang Di and Lao Zi (*huanglao dao*) or Five Bushel Rice (*wudoumi dao*) or Grand Peace Dao (*taiping dao*). They were the denominations affiliated to religious Daoism at the time when the plebeians sought to solace themselves in the trauma of social chaos. Yet, for the clergy with advanced expertise they still bear the term Daoist or Taoist immortals (*shenxian jia*). One of the influential bibliographers in the later years of the Han Dynasty, Liu Xin, separated philosophic Daoists from Daoist immortals in his

¹ Lu Xun, “*The Collection of Letters of Lu Xun*” (*luxun Shuxinji*) (Beijing: People’s Literature Press, 1976), p. 18.

famous Seven Categories of Scholarship (*qi lue*), distinctive of the mental superiority of Lao Zi (also Lao Tzu) and Zhuang Zi (Chuang Tzu) as metaphysical thinkers over the immortals originated from the country bumpkins subject to conjuring tricks. Nevertheless, ever since the emergence of religious Daoism the traditional immortals managed to associate themselves with Lao Zi and his academically prestigious work Tao Te Ching (*daodejing*) or *The Works of Lao Zi* (Lao Tzu), intentionally assorting the magic writing (*fulu*) to Daoist philosophy. Thus, the ensuing years in the Wei and Jin Dynasties witnessed an integrated category of Daoism, to which Daoists, scholars of Lao Zi's philosophy, the immortals, and the alchemists were all affiliated. After this integrated category of Daoism, both Chinese scholars and plebeians have been accustomed to the term Daoism with ambiguity of philosophic Lao Zi and religious Daoism.

The Journey of Religious Daoism

In the later years of the Han Dynasty, China was thrown into a chaos both socially and mentally. This was also the period of transition from the Han Dynasty to the Wei and Jin Dynasties, historically known to ordinary Chinese as The Three Kingdoms (*sanguo*), a household name acquired from both history records and novels with a similar title, i.e., The Records of the Three Kingdoms (*sanguo zhi*) and The Romance of the Three Kingdoms (*sanguo yanyi*). No other historical philosophy has been as popularly stated in the introductory sentence as "Social history will never violate the pattern of union and separation by their turns" in The Romance of the Three Kingdoms. Such historical philosophy mirrors the direct evidence of "the shift of five virtues by their respective destinies" (*wude zhuan yi*) based on the irresistible rotation of five cosmic elements (*wuxing xiangshengxiangke*) in their intercourse of natural male and female (*yinyang*). The parallel of destined cosmology and human history reiterated the Chinese religious conviction in the conflicting Chinese society that Grand Peace (*taiping*) would somehow condescend to salvage people with food, health, fairness, and peace.

Thus, in the east there was a guy named Zhang Jue who initiated the Grand Peace Dao Movement (*taiping dao*) and another initiator named Zhang Ling who introduced the Five Bushel Rice Dao (*wudoumi dao*) in southwestern China.

For Zhang Jue, the Dao (doctrine or philosophy) of Yellow Emperor and Lao Zi must be transformed into religious doctrines with miracles before it can be piously worshipped and socially applied in its concepts and salvation when plebeians surviving in a very pessimistic chaos both socially and spiritually. Therefore, he exaggerated himself to be the "grand moral prophet" (*da xianliang shi*) in "recruiting disciples by performing ritual of kowtowing to the master. The master and his disciples eventually invented magic waters to fight against ghosts and spirits and helped the sick cure their disease by healing powers of the blessed waters, the populace at large being fabulously attracted. His dispatched disciples went to persuade people far and wide as to call together hundreds of thousands

followers, leading to an extensive rebellion echoed in all eight prefectures in central China”.² This social revolt against the imperial authority for Grand Peace was the institutional appearance of earliest religious Daoism with the ultimate social justice dedicated by its rebellious Yellow Turban Army (*huang jin jun*). Yet, this first show in the mixture of individual physical healing and social campaign did not sustain the religious Daoism too long but around 20 years before it disappeared into oblivion under the suppression of the government and local armed forces.

Zhang Ling, as another hero of the religious Daoist initiators, arose from southwestern China in a similar way to win gradual support from his patients, their relatives, and townsfolk, his miraculous Dao being witnessed in relieving people of a myriad of physical and mental troubles. What was common for those earliest Daoist religious leaders was their moral passion in performing healing miracles by exceptional treating charms like magic spell, writing, ashes, and water. They were simultaneously called miracle-working doctors as well as justice of the peace. When Zhang Lu succeeded his father Ling as the religious leader for the newly established hegemony, merging administrative, religious, and military forces together. The regular recruitment for his religious institution was to donate five bushels of rice in return for the disease treatment, or even not for magic treatment but abiding by it just as ritual acceptance for a Daoist. The religious leader functioned at the same time as the military commander. His disciples and soldiers were required to recite the 5,000 words in Tao Te Ching (*the works of Lao Zi or Lao Tzu*) as their religious bible and to serve in the Daoist Sanctuary (*yi she*) salvaging those homeless refugees. The religious administration in the area where Daoism was morally encouraged and socially obliged brought about the solidarity of peace and honesty for more than 30 years. Hence, the Daoist disciples and their friendly laity began to worship Zhang Ling, the initiator of religious Daoism, as the Heavenly Master Zhang (*zhang tianshi*), and his denominations as the Heavenly Master Daoism (*tianshi dao*). When the religious Daoism adopted the title for their pope as the supreme spiritual leader, the Heavenly Master (*tianshi*) has been permanently sanctified with variation only to its consecutive generation, like the first Heavenly Master to the following Heavenly Masters in commemorating its holy genealogy.

The Heavenly Master Daoism (*tianshi dao*) was separated into south and north branches as it was introduced into the South and North Throne in the Wei and Jin Dynasties immediately after its emergence in the Late Han Dynasty. In the North Throne, Kou Qianzhi declared his orthodox as the Heavenly Master and began to rid traditional Daoist demonization of its donation in money or rice, accusing the fallacy of Daoist sexual intercourse as means to accomplish Dao in physical bodies. He strictly confined Daoist doctrines to be compatible with Confucian proprieties and physical exercise of breath controlling (*lian qigong*). As his

² Fan Ye, “Biography of Huangfu Song, The History of Late Han Dynasty (*houhanshu, huangfu song zhuan*),” in *The Twenty-Four Histories* (Version of Simplified Chinese) (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 2000) Vol. 71, p. 1553.

religious doctrine and practice were properly regulated to the official rules, this Daoist denomination was tolerated and even favored by the North Throne.

In the South Throne, the Heavenly Master Lu Xiujing was more interested in compiling various sorts of Daoist classics and formalizing Daoist rituals, resulting in boosting institutional Daoism in the South and paving the way for Tao Hongjing, a following influential Heavenly Master in South China. Among all his talents in Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism Tao Hongjing, first of all, distinguished himself as medical specialist. His works *The True Decree (zhengao)*, *Notes on Self-Cultivation*, and *Long Life (yangxing yanming lu)*, *The Annotations to Herbal Medicine (bencao jizhu)*, and *The Pocket Compendium of 101 Prescriptions (zhouhou baiyi fang)* enriched religious Daoism a great deal in both herbal medicine and the immortal faith. His reputation in both life preservation and integrating Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism proved to be a constant attraction to his contemporary politicians, King Liang Wu in the Southern Dynasty often sent for his consultancies and he was thus nicknamed “the prime minister in deep mountains” (*shanzhong zaixiang*). His ideological contribution to religious Daoism also merits our attention in that he introduced into Daoism theological immortal system of three deities in their respective purities, cosmological, metaphysical, and physical by combining Confucian ethics, Buddhist epistemology, Daoist spiritual cultivation, and alchemist pills. These introductions and reforms accomplished by Heavenly Master Dao led to the prosperity of Daoist Denomination of Mount Mao.

The Tang Dynasty is distinctive to its previous Wei and Jin Dynasties, in that it has been extolled as the Golden Times of Chinese history, an empire attractive to all foreign countries which had available contacts and trade with it. For Chinese religion and philosophy, the Tang Dynasty is also creditable for its religious tolerance and ideological diversities. Since the empire was built by the Li clan who came from western China and even with foreign blood from his maternal side, the royal family managed to reconcile traditionally authentic Confucian ideology with Daoism and Buddhism, the latter two having some mysterious connections with them. People had been accustomed to the superstition that Confucius himself as the patriarch of Confucian schools of thought was an amateur student to Lao Zi,³ the patriarch of Daoism and Buddhism was the transformed Daoism after Lao Zi escaped social chaos in central China into the west where he spread his doctrines widely in India (*laozi huahu*). These legends and vague impressions encouraged the royal family of the Li Clan to advertise and support religious Daoism in the interest of their political and cultural orthodoxies. Aligning themselves as the offspring of Lao Zi, the royal family of the Tang Dynasty spent the national budget in building up a great many Daoist Temples (*daoguan*) and eulogized Lao Zi as the Venerable Saint (*laojun*) or the Most Venerable Saint (*taishang laojun*) and also entitled Zhuang Zi as the Southern Saint (*nanhua zhenren*). Accordingly,

³ When Confucius died, his followers were accounted for being split into eight sects and Confucius was quoted to have visited and learnt from Lao Zi.

the works to their credits were sanctified as scriptures of Daoism. Emperor Xuanzong was widely acknowledged as the most devoted to religious Daoism, taking initiative in annotating *Tao Te Ching* or *the Works of Lao Zi* and authorized it to be the Mega Scripture of all Daoism Classics. Emperor Wuzong was addicted to magic spells and manufacturing pills for immortality, having sponsored the constructing Tower for Immortals and decreed to persecute Buddhism under the suggestion of the wicked Daoist Zhao Guizhen.

However, the mainstay of religious Daoism in society was different from Daoist political sycophancy and the elixir of life much sought after in the imperial court. These were religious Daoists prevalent among the down to earth practitioners and religious scholars. For ordinary Chinese, they did not care about whether Sun Simiao was authorized with the title of Heavenly Master of Daoism, but they praise him as the King of Medicine (*yaowang*), the Chinese Hippocrates if you like, but he was a Daoist in its true sense, taking manufacturing elixir of life as a means to cure disease and keep fit rather than as assurance for being immortal. Another Daoist scholar Wang Xuanlan, the author of *The Records of Metaphysical Gem (xuan zhu lu)*, proposed the universal Daoist nature, like universal Buddha nature that guarantees every being its equal right and chance to be an enlightened Buddha, that anyone who cultivates himself in the spirit of Daoist philosophy is consecrated with Dao, thus being the cosmic incarnate in the Daoist practitioner. Sima Chengzhen was most distinguished in Daoist philosophy as stated about “How to Obtain Dao (*dedao*)” in his essay: “What is believed as Dao is the entity of miracles, being spiritual with universal nature, being empty in physical substance, being unpredictable in its tendency, being effect without cause, and being endless in its production. It was revealed to our heavenly master in ambiguity and inherited ever since to us. Its’ omnipresent truth lies at the deepest level of theory. The most outstanding Daoist abides by its doctrine in most humble and honest way as to embody it. The cosmic dynamics will gradually exhibit itself in the body sitting in meditation to reincarnate oneself with Dao, integrating one’s physical being and transforming it into a godlike Daoist”.⁴ His theory on cultivating oneself and obtaining Dao has an enduring impact on Daoist practitioners of succeeding generations.

The Song Dynasty also saw the separation between North and South China, with ethnic Jin people governing North China for the transitory turmoil and nomadic Mongolians finally conquering China in the establishment of the Yuan Dynasty.

The Song emperors in North China spared no effort in integrating the Confucian heaven mandate faith with Daoist political affiliation to imperial orthodox. The well-known Daoist master Zhang Boduan advocated the compromising principles between Confucian heaven mandate and Daoist nature principle, renovating Daoist theory with Confucian ethics and Buddhist intuitive methodology and introduced into Daoism the theory combining physical pills and metaphysical entity. When the royal family was forced to move to Southern China, North and Central China

⁴ Sima Chengzhen, “Transcendence in Meditation (*zuowang lun*)”, in *The Concise Encyclopedia of Daoist Classics (daozang jiyao)*. (Chengdu: Bashu Press, 1995), Vol. 7, p. 70.

was ruled by the ethnic Jin people, a new Daoist denomination which steadily came into being. There were five religious patriarchs in this omnitruth Daoism, of whom Lü Dongbin and Wang Chongyang being amazingly popular with Daoist affiliates. Wang Chongyang was the style name of Wang Zhe, who revolutionized the Daoist theory by focusing on preserving Daoist nature and mental transcendence rather than keeping physical body from decaying. He proposed to the merits of the three traditions in Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism, underlining a balanced cultivation between universal nature and human mandate, and prioritizing nature to mandate. He made it prominent that cultivating nature could enhance man's conscience and mentality while cultivating mandate only man's physical body and strength. As he moved from his hometown Shanxi to Shandong, i.e., from Northwest to Southeast, Wang Chongyang gained a glaring success by having promoted his omnitruth Daoism nation wide. One of his seven famous disciples was known as Qiu Chuji, who, invited by Genghis Khan, met with the Great Emperor in the snowy mountain, convincing him of staying away from massacre. His doctrine of universal benevolence and caring for the social vulnerable rather than Daoist own ever-lasting body assured The Omnitruth Daoism the most influential religion in China.

The Yuan Dynasty of Mongolians ruled China for nearly one hundred years before the sovereignty came back to the hands of Chinese Han people in the Ming Dynasty. Although the royal family arose from a Buddhist monk, still the succeeding emperors after the beginning emperor Zhu Yuanzhang were fanatic about purified sacrifice offered to Daoist gods. In order to consecrate his throne usurped from his nephew, Emperor Yongle or Zhu Di deified one of Daoist immortals Zhen Wu as the Metaphysical Heavenly God (*xuantian shangdi*) and donated Wu Dang Mountain as his Holy Palace. Under the auspices of royal budget, Wu Dang Mountain built up the most magnificent complex of Daoist temples, where Zhang Sanfeng was worshipped as the Grand Patriarch Heavenly Master. And his religious doctrines included the mutual cultivation between nature and mandate, inner intuition corresponding with outer moral duty and uniting inner life impulse with outer social relations. Such morally oriented religious doctrines were amusingly inculcated in its audience through various fictions or legends. In the transition between the Ming and Qing Dynasties, the seventh Patriarch Heavenly Master of The Omnitruth Daoism named Wang Changyue survived the already declining denomination by introducing new percepts and demanding their strict observations. In the format of Buddhist conversion and precepts keeping, he emphasized the observation of three treasures: Dao, Classic, and Master, these were respectively associated with practitioner's physical body in behaving, mentality in peace, and intuition in enlightenment guided by Daoist truth.

The Daoist reform in the Republic of China was the continuation of Chinese response to the intrusion of alien religions from the modern western countries. As the concept of natural science was firstly introduced to Chinese intellectuals by western Jesuit priests, Daoist patriarch or laity became open to other disciplines of modern science to update their own alchemist technique in manufacturing pills of

immortality in the Republic of China. Chen Yingning, the 19th Master of Lay Daoist, introduced into the Daoist Scholarship of Immortals (*xian xue*) the modern western medicine, chemistry and life preserving, and contributed a great deal in the forming of Daoist new philosophy on life. His synthesizing Chinese traditions with western scholarship helped transforming Daoist Inner Intuitional Accomplishment (*neidanxue*) into New Immortal Theory on Physiological Life (*shengbenzhuyi xianxue*).

The Intellectual Clues and Aspects of Religious Daoism

The basic classics of Daoist work are those addressed to the credits of Daoist scholars, the most notable ones are *The Works of Lao Zi* or *Tao Te Ching*, *The Works of Zhuang Zi*, *The Works of Duke Huai Nan*, and *The Works of Baopu Zi*. These basic classics provided the central ideas or intellectual clues to both philosophical and religious Daoism. As for the origin of religious Daoism, we may trace to the muddle-headedness in natural survival of the world in Lao Zi, and Zhuang Zi was more famous for his despising human society as husks and human body as shackles in favor of Daoist utopia. These Daoist escapism joined immortals in ancient folklore and imaginary spiritual journeys in Daoist discussions and solidified them into the mentality of Daoist religion.

The eternity of life has always been the motif of religious Daoism, which is revealed in the coinage of jargon Shen Xian, Shen indicating divine being and Xian fairy being, and they combined into Shenxian, the English equivalent the immortal is accepted as Daoist incarnate. But this Daoist immortal aspiration did have its spiritual roots in *The Works of Lao Zi* (*Lao Tzu*) or *Tao Te Ching* in its exploring into the cosmic dynamics: “The empty valley resembles a female vagina, a metaphysical hollow gate producing endless physical beings like an invisible cosmic root”.⁵ This was the very ancient and direct observation and superficial analogy drawn from animated life bearing, which the philosopher meant to show the connection between human and cosmos, and between his life and cosmic dynamics. Even nowadays, the concept of human body as a micro-cosmos is very popular among Chinese medical traditions or those who practice the breath control exercise (*qigong*, or simply Chinese *gongfu*). This could be the obvious impact of religious Daoism in its life analogy with the cosmos. Again he observed the life process and durability in connection with the cosmic air: “the soul and spirituality are united with physical body, gathering the finest cosmic air is to produce a physical entity like invisible embryo in its earliest stage, and to purify one’s mind of all ephemeral illusions is to set a mental mirror to reflect accurately”.⁶ His sense of momentum of life in the cosmic frame told the

⁵ Chapter 6, *The Works of Lao Zi*.

⁶ Chapter 10, *The Works of Lao Zi*.

importance of human mental wisdom as to imitate the cosmic dynamics free from phenomenal fractures of life, which was otherwise indicated as “It’s only Dao that can produce entity, which contains male *yang* and female *yin*, and then their intercourse gives endless birth to everything. So universal beings permanently reside in the union of *yin* and *yang*, the macro-harmony realized in their intercourse procures cosmic beings in their limitless numbers”.⁷ This is worshipped by later religious Daoists as grand Dao generalized from Lao Zi’s cosmology, for them practicing Dao (*xiudao*) as an affiliate must be fortified by comprehending Dao (*zhidao*), which has been conventional for Chinese to correspond to any new message or directives to do something as “Yes, Sir, I have comprehended Dao (*wo zhidao*)”. In the same line, yet more concrete in intimate experience, Zhuang Zi explained: “The perfect Dao lies in metaphysical deepness, its polar being invisible to any physical sight. Your spiritual tranquility without sight and sound will gently embrace such a Dao of its own accord. Your body can endure longest like the cosmic Dao, bereft of desire, anxiety and burden, and your spirituality will be inherent within your body, free from sight, sound and mind”.⁸ For him Dao symbolizes the cosmic eternity, if human follows the cosmic doctrine of natural evolution he may acquire the similar life dynamics that will ensure the Dao practitioner equal life longevity like cosmos, being the very sense of the Daoist immortals aspired to become by later religious Daoists. In fact, Zhuang Zi himself developed the concept of godlike Daoist in “a free travel in the universe by floating with clouds and riding on flying dragon, surviving on wind and dew rather than eating cereals”.⁹ By pure imagination and mental enlightenment, Zhuang Zi believed that spiritual concentration would emancipate person from his physical dependence on food, position, fame, and wealth, leading him naturally to integrate a biological body with supernatural entity of Dao, mentality, cosmic air, and godlikeness, hence generalizing the ways of cultivating oneself by breath control exercises (*qigong*) into natural peace, metaphysical entity, transcendence in meditation, mental emancipation, and concentration on life originator. Such intellectual observations by Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi were later on echoed in Daoist thinkers in the Han Dynasty as “Fish feeding on water is good at swimming and fears no cold, earthworm feeding on mud has no heart but intellect, bear feeding on trees has might but is vulnerable to fit of anger, deer feeding on grasses is good at running but slow to react, silkworm feeding on leaves is good at producing threads but will decline into butterfly, tiger and leopard feeding on flesh are adventurous but cold-blooded, tortoise feeding on air has a mysterious yet long life, human feeding on cereals is intelligent but short-live, so the one feeding on nothing has a

⁷ Chapter 49, *The Works of Lao Zi*.

⁸ Natural Peace (*zaiyou*), *The Works of Zhuang Zi*.

⁹ Mentality of Cosmic Liberty (*xiaoyaoyou*), *The Works of Zhuang Zi*.

life like god subject to none of the previous attributes”.¹⁰ These were fantastic analogies and depictions on the Daoist scholars’ associations between what they observed and imagined, but were later on turned into the spiritual sources to construct a world of the immortals and mystical principles to conduct breath control exercises. As Daoism in the pre-Qin Dynasty was advocated by its creative thinkers as one of the “one hundred schools of thought” (*baijia zhengming*) primarily in the form of philosophy, but the Han Dynasty sustained Daoism with two contrastive spheres, one being the political philosophy in the beginning of the Han to offset the despotic austerity of the legalist Qin and another being the spiritual solace for those socially vulnerable class in the late years when the dynasty was declining beyond any remedy. These two Daoist sects were thriving on the romantic metaphysics of genius scholars like Xiang Xiu and Guo Xiang, who were the most worshipped commentators to *the works of Lao Zi* and *Zhuang Zi*, and on the immortal theory of Ge Hong who succeeded in reconciling the mystic ways to maintain youth and long life with the philosophical observations on natural miracles in ancient society. Since there had been a sustaining tradition among the ordinary populace seeking for keeping youth and long life, Ge Hong and his work of “Baopu Zi” or “complying with cosmic dynamics in its literal sense” attracted much attention from all walks of life. In his work, Daoist Master Ge Hong reaffirmed the existence of the immortals and the feasibility of long life more systematically and cogently than previously held legends. He noticed the nature of ever-greenness of pines and longevity of tortoise and crane, or popularly termed “tortoise life” (*guishou*) and “immortal crane” (*xianhe*) as well as their metamorphosis, so he insisted such nature could be transferred to human if modeling themselves after the way of growing or living like these physical beings of longevity. Even today one could casually notice Chinese in their physical exercise in the modes of standing like pine tree, moving and breathing like a tortoise and crane in the park morning exercise. This was the initiative that human can take, according to his immortal theory, in keeping fit and maintaining long life by “modeling oneself after the universal Dao”. Another assistant to obtain such immortal objective would be producing and taking some elixir durable in the nature like substance of gold and silver. The quality to survive the decaying corrosion in gold and silver and their rarity made Ge Hong and other Daoist believers certain that the manufactured mixture of gold and silver with some other imaginary ingredients might have the function to transform human bone and flesh into the similar substance guaranteeing human body from declining into old age or bone fracture and floppy flesh. His conviction of natural quality of long life in the natural world led him engaging with the manufacturing the elixir, from which his recorded observations and reflections contributed a great deal to history of chemistry, minerals, and Chinese herbal medicine. It may not be excluded that the transplant of durability of substance like gold and silver or their compounds with other ingredients into the

¹⁰ Liu An, “Life Geography (*dixing*), The Works of Duke Huai Nan (*huannanzi*),” in *Anthologies of Master Scholars* (*zhuzi jicheng*) (Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Press, 1986), Vol. 7, chapter 4, p. 60.

human body like modern drug abusers might have caused regular deadly effects to those elixir takers. Therefore, we could also read the negative comments about Daoist exploring the mystery of nature and eternal life as the “evil Daoist” (*yaodao*) with “evil arts” (*yaoshu*).

As the religious Daoism began to emerge in the late Han Dynasty, there was a book in its making and circulation among its believers and that book was acknowledged as *The Book of Grand Peace* (*taipingjing*), the first authentic classic with Daoist religious movement, and its making, circulation, and systematic doctrines declared the establishment of Daoism as an indigenous religion, especially among the social grass peasant farmers. The traditional black magic combined with the much advocated “human obligation to heavenly mandates” (*tianren ganying*) by Confucian ideology stimulated the religious theory from the Daoist perspective, so the anonymous writers and compilers devoted their tenacious efforts to *The Book of Grand Peace*: “We humbly, as human beings, receive and worship the doctrines decreed from his majesty Heavenly Master, committing ourselves to constructing a grand peace road, in the spirit of his grand sympathy for us poor creatures, open for all people under the heaven to be willing to behave morally, consciously abnegating all evil tricks”.¹¹ To encourage people to behave morally and to keep clear of the evil motivation and social calamity has been the constant theme to attract its followers for all religions in its early period; this was particularly true with religious Daoism when its advocates intended to wring moral and social sense out of Daoist cosmology and ontology. Such religious motif was clearly stated in the book Daoists had been working and compiling, which targeted at “revealing the cosmological and social doctrines in the stead of his majestic Heavenly Master, ordering mountains and rivers in the nature and making laws and rules for human kings in society”.¹² The traditional Dao in the relations between nature and society in *The Works of Lao Zi* was thus turned into the supreme doctrine of religious Daoism in the juncture of social chaos when the helpless peasant farmers had no other choice but revolt. And the same doctrine, similar term altered by modern Christian priests in the nineteenth century and similar peasant farmers threw themselves into another historical revolt as The Grand Peace Movement of 1851–1864 or the Taiping Uprising (*taiping tianguo*). Therefore, we could safely tell that the primitive reflections on social chaos and its idealized solutions would naturally refer to its own cosmology and ontology in the Daoist tradition to work out a theory and institution. This was the situation and logic of religious Daoism in its early years: Grand Peace mirroring the social anticipation of big chaos.

As being fully exposed in the researches about the making and evolution of religious Daoism, the intellectual facets are exhibited in the works of both Daoists

¹¹ Yang Jilin, *An Annotated Translation to The Book of Grand Peace* (*taipingjing jinzhuyinyi*), Vol. 1, pp. 364–365.

¹² Yang Jilin, *An Annotated Translation to The Book of Grand Peace* (*taipingjing jinzhuyinyi*), Vol. 1, p.508.

and Male and Female Advocates (*yinyangjia*) expounding and proposing the cosmic dynamics and eternal life of the immortals. They all submitted their convictions and methodologies to the revelation of philosopher Lao Zi in authenticating their views or even imaginary opinions about life and nature, later on being even ridiculously added by the story of Lao Zi traveling into India to convert Shakyamuni Buddha (*laozi huahu*).

As the Han Dynasty witnessed the burgeoning of religious Daoist thoughts based on the mystic connections between Daoist natural philosophy and its Utopian salvation from the chaotic and conflicting society, the Wei and Jin Dynasties prioritized the romantic mental emancipation of Zhuang Zi before the sophisticated ontology of Lao Zi, merging them into the scholarship of Zhuang and Lao (*zhuanglao*). But following the Tang Dynasty, religious Daoist ideology did have a welcome boost to update *the works of Lao Zi* and *Zhuang Zi*, the theoretical success being in the Super-Metaphysics (*chong xuan zhi dao*). The proponent of this ‘super-metaphysics’ was an academically committed Daoist practitioner and thinker known as Cheng Xuanying. He ambitiously sophisticated the metaphysics proposed in *The Works of Lao Zi* by introducing the interpretation of Buddhist *prajñā*, accentuating that mysterious entity of metaphysics transcends the term ‘metaphysics’ itself, and not being subject to both the metaphysical definition and its negation, it demonstrates its super entity when traditional Daoist metaphysics is verified and then surpassed in its negation, somewhat like Hegelian synthesis after thesis and antithesis. This reconfirmed metaphysics is what Chinese Daoist scholars believe the ‘super-metaphysics’. When it applied in the religious practice, Cheng Xuanying turned to enrich the concept of the ‘mentality of cosmic liberty (*xiaoyaoyou*)’ or figuratively the universal travel in *The Works of Zhuang Zi* by Buddhist enlightenment that the person with desire could be enslaved by something substantial as well as without desire by conceptual nothing. To him, both substantial desire and conceptual nothing could distract a person from his purifying mentality. A perfect free mentality realized in the universal travel could be one not confined to both the enslavement and emancipation from it. Such intuitional wisdom achieved mysteriously could turn a Daoist practitioner into an immortal indeed. The super-metaphysics revealed Daoist thinker Cheng Xuanying his tendency toward religious aristocracy like ancient Jewish prophet chosen exclusively for receiving and interpreting God’s will. He associated the super-metaphysics with person who was born superior by nature, whom he termed person with super-metaphysics (*shangjizhishi*). Such person, by his religious logic, was the Daoist saint beyond human fate, their prototype being the Daoist Creator (*yuanshi tianzun*). Here we come to see how Daoist master scholar, under the influence of Buddhist nirvana and Confucian saint incarnate, managed to deify Daoist philosophy originated from *the works of Lao Zi* and *Zhuang Zi* in the form of theology, constructing its own parallel theory for those Daoist practitioners to become the immortals.

In a transition between the Tang and Song Dynasties, religious Daoism was slowly gaining attention and comprehension from both lower and higher social ranks since the pursuit of a long life and even a peaceful and healthy life became

readily accepted after either social chaos or human physical troubles. But the Daoist master scholars knew quite well that the true spirit of Daoism was not merely confined to becoming the immortals, the sole, and ultimate motive of Daoism being the grand peace between cosmological dynamics, social conformity, and human harmony. At that time, the most celebrated Daoist scholar Chen Tuan was recorded to respond the inquiry from the Emperor Shi Zong, the ruler of the Zhou Administration about how to become the immortal flying up to the heaven: “Your majesty should be appropriately attentive to the social rule, being a monarch of subjects of all four seas in the world. The business of the yellow and the white could do no good to you”. And in the similar way, he declined the quest from the Emperor Tai Zong of the Song Dynasty who lost in his admiration for a hundred-year-old Daoist immortal in the Huashan Mountain: “I do not know anything special about the business of the yellow and the white, and the way of keeping fit by inhaling and exhaling has nothing to do with magic spells”.¹³ For such a sophisticated Daoist, Chen Tuan might be well conversant with “the business of the yellow and the white”, the jargon for Daoist alchemist making pills of immortality by mixing gold (yellow) and silver (white), but he sagaciously insinuated that religious Daoism should not be isolated from ruling the world in the spirit of cosmological Dao, caring for the universal life and vitality in a natural world rather than being an individual practitioner.

In the Song Dynasty, the Neo-Confucianism came to the center of ideological stage which prioritized human ethics to any other scholarship, including Chinese Buddhism in its Chan sect and religious Daoism in its “pith-consolidation-sex” (*fangzhongshu*) as the effective way to become the immortal. However, the substantial opposition from Neo-Confucian movement drove Chinese Buddhism to the track of its pure-land sect or least the integration between pure-land and Chan sects, while Daoist “pith-consolidation-sex (*fangzhongshu*)” was channeled to Inner Intuitional Accomplishment (*neidanxue*) which expanded the pith inside the female to the cosmic air one can accumulate inside his own body coincided with the outer universal one. The Daoist theory of the immortal had been transformed from “returning from an old fogey to an innocent baby” to “integrating oneself with the natural Dao”, thus promoted the boost of Inner Intuitional Accomplishment.

According to the diversified classics concerning the inner intuitional accomplishment or the inner pills of immortality obtained by self-cultivation, taking pills of yellow and white from outer refined ingredients must be accompanied by the inner pills acquired by one’s own accumulation, the latter being termed as “the mutual cultivation between mentality and cosmic air (*xingming shuangxiu*)”. By the doctrines of this theory, mentality originates from the heart of a Daoist practitioner with full initiative and cosmic air provides with boundless resources attainable through the practitioner’s consistent efforts. The doctrine of

¹³ Tuo Tuo, “Biographies of Chen Tuan in Hermits, The History of the Song Dynasty (*songshi yinyizhuan*),” in *The Twenty-Four Histories* (Version of Simplified Chinese) (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 2000) Vol. 216, p. 10413.

accumulating the inner pills of immortality was expounded in the Daoist classics as “The miracle of accumulating the inner pill of immortality is primarily conditioned to condensing and refining the cosmic air inside one’s body, then such air can be absorbed into pith which permeates in one’s body, and could ultimately reunited with the cosmic air in transforming the practitioner into an immortal like any endless life in the cosmos”. And “whenever such cosmic air is flowing through one’s body, it radiates cosmic brilliance just like a micro cosmos in the body”.¹⁴ The essence of this paralleled illumination about the inner pills of immortality lies in refining cosmic air by one’s inside intuitional concentration. Such doctrines guiding the Daoist practitioner in becoming an immortal reveals its peculiar theory about the adapting oneself to the natural way, alien to the philosophy in natural obedience with the Dao as advocated in *the works of Lao Zi* and *Zhuang Zi*. In the natural philosophy of Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi, man should take the course of birth, growth, and death naturally and peacefully synchronous to other natural beings, but in the Inner Intuitional Accomplishment, a Daoist practitioner could reverse this physical cycle by integrating oneself with cosmic air, extracting cosmic vitality and creativity in permanently substantiating his own body. And such theory was technically chanted by Daoist practitioners as “stealing cosmic vitality and usurping its creative power (*daotiandi duozaohua*)” and “my fate at my own disposal rather by nature (*woming zaiwo buzaitian*)”. In this new Daoist trend, one could appreciate more or less the spirit of Prometheus in Chinese religious context and its peculiar original individualism in becoming an immortal.

Ways of Becoming the Immortal

How to become or achieve the desired indestructible entity is generally called the Dao to work with it. Hence for religious Daoist practitioners, there have been diversifying Daos to become immortal humans (*huo shenxian*), among which the most frequently referred to in Daoist resources are the making outer and inner pills of immortality and “pith-consolidation-sex (*fangzhongshu*)”. In terms of Dao as the ways to practice and improve substantially their dialectics was stated that concentration on cosmic air without inner intuition would inflict immediate pains on the practitioners’ conscience and attention only focused on inner intuition without making pills of immortality could seduce the practitioner to physical abyss other than sainthood.

Religious Daoists were primarily divided into two categories by way of keeping its doctrines; these were adherents to making pills of immortality (*liandanpai*) and keepers to magic writings and sacrifices (*fulupai*). The adherents to making pills of immortality were chiefly committed to turning their bodies into indestructible

¹⁴ Zeng Zao, “The Golden Pill, Daoist Doctrine(*daoshu, jindan*)”, in *The Concise Encyclopedia of Daoist Classics (daozang jiyao)* (Chengdu: Bashu Press, 1995), Vol. 7, p. 492.

cosmic beings like pine, tortoise, and crane, being individual merry-makers. But the keepers to magic writings and sacrifices were mainly dedicated to religious services for their clients, being morally social servants. The former would usually keep away from having a family, while the latter may have a family and children. Basically, the religious Daoist tends to be the former.

The Way to Outer Pills

The outer pill of immortality was worshipped as the magic elixir or panacea, not only killing diseases but being able to keep human body durable like gold, so it was called Golden Pill of Grand Miracle (*jindan dayao*). But the professional documents in religious Daoism would describe it the business of yellow and white, to the mysterious quality of the pill and the respect of Daoist adherents. The Daoist pill makers usually would prepare a stove to refine those ingredients like cinnabar, lead, mercury, and mica, and also some parts of animal or some sorts of herbs, even in cases possibly some gold and silver filings being added. When these ingredients were refined in the stove they could be smelted into some pills which the Daoist alchemist believed to be the elixir for longevity. The process and the assumed effects were recorded this way: “The pills for immortality are obtained by refining in the stove, the longer they are refined the more magic powers may be acquired. If added with gold filings the pills remain more consolidated, and when they are buried under the earth for days, such pills still remain rustproof. The pills, both with and without gold filings, are swallowed into human body, they could be absorbed into human muscles and fleshes, making their bodies permanently solid and vital. This is the way to consolidate human body by outer substance of durability, similar to the eternal fire fuelled by sufficient lard”.¹⁵ There were other meticulous elements to monitor the making of the pills, like temperature controlled for the stove, the magic spells and writings to synchronize the interactive change between the natural male *yang* and female *yin*, and refining nine times before the pills were believed to be finally made. By such device and process, the pill makers would state that the pills at this stage have acquired the better quality than natural gold and silver. They would contribute a special term for their product as “yellow shoot (*huangya*)” or “the master substance of five basic metals (*wujinzhizhu*)”. By taking these pills, the religious Daoists believed that these substances would transform human bodies into the everlasting entities. But the actual situations would often provide the opposite consequence, many pill takers having their quick death of inner poison, noticeably like several emperors in the Tang Dynasty. Still some expected positive effects accompanied the making pills of immortality in the

¹⁵ Ge Hong, “Golden Pills, Inner Chapters of The Works of Baopu Zi (*baopuzi neipian, jindan*)”, in *Anthologies of Master Scholars* (*zhuzi jicheng*) (Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Press, 1986), Vol. 8, p. 13.

contribution of pill makers to the observations, detailed analysis, and improvement of chemistry, medical treatment and smelting operation.

The Way to Inner Pills

The Works of Yellow Central Color (huangtingjing) is held to be the chief classic for the Daoist denomination of the Inner Pills. In fact, it was the anonymous compilation during the Wei and Jin Dynasties which advocated the intuitional concentration on inner pith of cosmic dynamics, a competing sect to the Outer Pills. The classic acquired its name by the concept of the yellow color at the center of human body which could be parallel to the center of the universe. Since heart resides at the center of human body, which pumps blood for a whole body circulation, the Daoists believe the cosmic heart plays a major role in the everlasting universe. Then the analogy goes directly to the conviction that if one can assemble all messages of the universe at his heart he could equally acquire the cosmic dynamics in his body, safeguarding him eternal bodily existence. In the similar logic, *The Works of Yellow Central Color* advocates that there are various immortal spirits residing and traveling in many parts of the body, but one can only find them and enjoy their charms by intuitional concentration of one's heart.

The inner pills are not exactly similar to the outer pills with substantial color and form, but rather the intuitional awareness and psychological insinuation that the practitioner would feel and be reinforced by cosmic dynamics, the transformed entity pumping from his heart through the whole body. Such a way of obtaining inner pills was originally suggested in *the Works of Lao Zi* when associating the perseverance of body with an enlarged body-country: "To rule in the society is similar to ruling one's body, the essence lying in the economy of one's pith. The economy of one's pith means to master Dao in its natural creativity. The mastery of Dao avails itself in comprehending the cause and effect of all natural beings in the universe. The comprehension of cosmic dynamics tells the immensity of universal creativity, which insures the durable wholeness of a country. Such philosophy integrating a human body with a country reveals the truth visible to a lofty tree buttressed by its own deep roots. There cannot be wiser way for being immortal than this!"¹⁶ In Lao Zi, person, family, country, and the world are fabricated progressively into a cosmic community, in which the wisest way to build one up is to follow the cosmic doctrine revealed in the natural world, preserving and consolidating one's inner pith identical to the cosmic air in creative immensity to the rejection of any artificial endeavors.

To emulate the stove to make outer pills, the inner pill makers would also take human body as a natural stove to refine the cosmic air into pills. Similar to the ingredients of making outer pills, inner biological pith, identical cosmic air

¹⁶ Chapter 59, *The Works of Lao Zi*.

breathing in and out in the body and the spirit accompanying the blood, pith, and air circulated inside human body, the inner pill maker could manipulate the temperature in refining the pill and store them in the lower belly (*dantian*). The inner pills once made and stored in the lower belly can serve as life fountain permanently emitting cosmic energy to the body, sustaining all parts of the body free from all troubles in the ultimate attainment of much anticipated immortality. In many other cases, these expertise of inner pill making were generally explained as “the mutual cultivation between mentality and cosmic air (*xingming shu-angxiu*)”, which advocated the minimization of the cosmos in a human body while transplanting its cosmic dynamics in his immortal self-cultivation. The descriptions about the ways of making inner pills may vary in their different experiences and approaches, but its basic clue remain integral, i.e., the refined and stored inner pills would coincide with the cosmos outside the body in integrating its cosmic air and dynamics, and this is the motivation and objective of being a Daoist immortal. Therefore, the way of making inner pills has been inherited by modern practitioners of breath control exercise (*qigong*) in various improved forms of inner pill making, which western religion researchers would accept as mysterious religious experience of Chinese style. If we copy “You were made from soil, and you will become soil again” (Genesis 3:19) in the Bible, we could also say from inner pill makers: “You were made from cosmic air, and you will become cosmic air again,” for cosmic air the inner pill for Daoists. Whether a practitioner could obtain inner pill or attain the cosmic sphere of mentality (*taiji jingjie*), both religious Daoist and breath control exercisers could tell the mandatory factors such like appropriateness, aptitude, and commitment.

The Way to Devour Cosmic Air

To integrate oneself with cosmic air was termed by Daoist practitioners as “to devour cosmic air (*fuqi*)”. Even in our modern daily Chinese, we often hear the expression “to devour cosmic air” indicating absolute agreement or agree with something from heart to mouth (*xinfu koufu*). Yet, the phrase has its origin in earliest Daoist classic which discloses the connection between the cosmic air and the immortal. For ordinary people they believe air is physically felt by inhaling and exhaling, but inner pill makers or breath control exercisers would rather believe in “What the Dao Incarnate in the heaven is the son while in person the heart. Therefore Dao represents itself in air animating physical beings, and whatever has a life, wherever is the cosmic air.”¹⁷ *The Works of Guan Zi* was popular among the Daoist believers in the Han Dynasty, they took universal air as the evidence of Dao

¹⁷ Guan Zhong, “Catchwords, The Works of Guan Zi (*guanzi, shuyan*)”, in *Anthologies of Master Scholars* (*zhuzi jicheng*) (Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Press, 1986), Vol. 5, chap.12, p. 64.

which was assembled and transmuted into both celestial and earthly beings and people could tell ghosts and spirits wherever there was air and could cultivate themselves into Confucian saints or Daoist immortals by devouring and processing such cosmic air inside their bodies. Some believers in cosmic air took it for granted that the ever-green pines in the fresh air, free-flying white crane in the air and long-life tortoise eating nothing than pure air had been exceptionally benefited from this cosmic food, so they managed to devour, digest, and absorb this cosmic air in the hope of refining inner pills or circulating animating air inside their bodies, resulted in the Daoist sect of devouring cosmic air and various sects of breath control exercisers emulating pine, crane, and tortoise.

Pith-Consolidating-Sex (fangzhongshu)

If we tend to regard Confucianism as the male-oriented tradition, we would naturally take Daoism for the female-oriented tradition, both having their respective observation and interpretation of living beings. Opposite to the Confucian stress on male heaven in descending all beings under it, or a patriarchal cosmology, ancient Daoists accentuated the female in directly producing offspring, caring, durable companion, and consistent devotion toward her born babies. Like valley can flow creek and stream, female sexual organs can also produce lives perennially, so the Daoists inclined to believe female was the only mother for everything and its bearing organ also contained all miracles and vitalities that could furnish with whatever an immortal life needed. This supposition led to the theory that, by intercourse, male could obtain the endless animation sources from the female, which could be turned into internal pith of the male, directly consolidating his life in defiance of decline into old age. It was obvious for ancient Daoists that more sexes were not designed for fulfilling sensational desire but for protracting life expectancy. When modern Chinese employs the term “Dao of Female (*yindao*)” to denote vagina, it still bears the impact of Daoist faith that the female channel producing lives could also be the place for male to obtain endless life message in consolidating his pith of immortality. In fact, such works concerning pith-consolidating-sex were very popular while religious Daoism was gaining its momentum in the late years of the Han Dynasty, several famous works being assorted by this category: *Dao of Female with Master Rongcheng (rongcheng yindao)*, *Dao of Female with Master Wucheng (wuchengzi yindao)*, *Dao of Female with Saint King Yao and Shun (yaoshun yindao)*, *Dao of Female with Saint King Tang and Pangeng (tangpangeng yindao)*, *Dao of Female with Tianlao and Zazi (tianlao zazi yindao)*, *Dao of Female with Tainyi (tainyi yindao)*, *The Way to Enrich Male with Yellow Emperor and Three Saint Kings (huangdi sanwang yangyangfang)*, and *The Way of Pith-Consolidating-Sex with Three Traditions by Youzi (sanjia neifang youzifang)*. These recorded and the concerned books

recorded in another eight traditions in their 186 Volumes could provide a picture of scholarships on pith-consolidating-sex, which was further explained: “Pith-Consolidating-Sex was the consummate Dao in both cosmology and life bearing, thus our saint kings proclaimed proprieties in consolidating pith. Like commentary goes that the proclaimed musical proprieties are not intended for sensational pleasure but regulating sexual affairs to agree with Dao of female. If Pith-Consolidating-Sex were conducted in the spirit of proclaimed musical proprieties, it would be harmoniously constructive to prolong life. Yet there are abusers indulged in sensational pleasures exclusively, causing their easy physical declines and even cutting their lives short of their natural terms”.¹⁸ The legendary heroes with long life like the Yellow Emperor, Rongcheng and Pengzu, and others, all masters in comprehending and complying with Dao of Female. Definitely their Dao of Female is not phonetically equal to vagina of modern Chinese but its principle of life bearing and source of immortality, documentarily most of the Daoist immortals being male in agreement with this way of representing Dao in the human immortals.

The technique in the pith-consolidating-sex in Daoist practitioner was exposed in some relative documents, being mainly featured as sex without ejaculation or more sex with less ejaculation, sex without biological release and sex with only female orgasm as for male to absorb female nutritious liquid into his own body, consolidating the male pith. Such practitioner assumed frequent sex with different virginal girls would have miraculous effect for male without ejaculation to receive health and vigorous liquid from girls in their orgasms in consolidating his own pith vital to be immortal. Some Chinese ancient medical books and fictions even prescribed the number of girls a male should have sex over one night: “ten girls for one night sex (*yive yushinü*)”, its being biologically possible by the technique of no ejaculation from the male. This proposed method to make inner pills obviously took female sex organ as another human stove to refine pills of immortality, the stoves to refine pills taking their turns in outer physical stove, male biological stove, and female biological stove. Some Daoists even included the products relative to sex, pregnancy, and life bearing from the female side as complementary nutrients facilitating the process of refining inner pills, these products being placenta, female milk, saliva, and vagina mucus. The much advertised placenta extract (*taipansu*) on current Chinese media could still tell the influence of these female nutrients. Since the introduction and boost of Buddhism which committed its adherents strictly either to Buddhist celibacy or moral restraint in the Tang Dynasty and the ethics obligatory to family integrity by Confucian scholars in both the Song and Ming Dynasties, Daoist pith-consolidating-sex was constantly censured either as sowing wild evils (*zaonie*) or erotic corruption (*yinluan*), and

¹⁸ Ban Gu, “Assorted Scholarships, The History of Han Dynasty(*hanshu, yiwenzhi*),” in *The Twenty-Four Histories* (Version of Simplified Chinese)(Beijing: Zhonghuashuju Press, 2000), Vol. 30, pp. 1396–1397.

therefore the Daoist way of pith-consolidating-sex has been morally eclipsed and socially suppressed to have remained largely a historical term.

The Daoist Classic System

Chinese Three Religions or Chinese Religious Teachings (*sanjiao*), i.e. Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism have their respective classic systems. For Confucianism this classic system is symbolized in *Complete Library in the Four Branches of Literature* (*siku quanshu*): the four divisions of Chinese scholarship in classics, history, philosophy, and belles-letters. For Chinese Buddhism this classic system is called *Chinese Encyclopedia of Buddhist Sutras* (*zhonghua dazangjing*), comprises Three Baskets of Buddhist Sutras (*sanzang*): Buddhist Teachings, Precepts, and Expositions. The Daoist Classic System is termed as *Encyclopedia of Daoist Classics* (*daoizang*), which includes both the classics of religious and philosophical Daoism, in addition to many other sorts of documents covering medicine, chemistry, biology, physical exercise, health care, astronomy, and physics, etc.

Began in the Wei and Jin Dynasties, a Daoist named Lu Xiujing from Lushan Mountain compiled all the Daoist works in the chief forms of The Three Grottoes (*sandong*), symbolizing the Daoist Paradise (*xianrendong*) where the Daoist Immortals used to reside and read their classics. According to Daoist legends, many famous Daoists became the immortals in the grottoes in Lushan Mountain where Daoist Paradise of Lü Dongbin and Han Zhongli was widely reputed as its peculiar scenic spot. Hence, The Three Grottoes were worshipped for the mainstay of Daoist Classics with their respective gradual levels: Grotto of Purity (*dongzhen*) for purified Daoist classics, Grotto of Cosmology (*dongxuan*) for cosmological creation and Grotto of Miracles (*dongshen*) for holy vocations.

The originative Daoist classics in The Three Grottoes were greatly enriched under the auspices of royal family in the Tang Dynasty, who were extravagantly proud of the same surname with Daoist patriarchal scholar Li Er or Lao Zi. The Three Grottoes were thus added with thirty-six branches with twelve branches of books attributed to one Grotto and being officially proclaimed guidance for religious practitioners and scholars. Nevertheless, the social chaos and nationwide looting rebels by the end of the Tang Dynasty destroyed many of the compilations and collections.

A fortune came to the Daoist classics when Emperor Zhen Zong of the Song Dynasty became addicted to religious Daoism. The same emperor took initiative in collecting and compiling *The Daoist Treasures* (*baowen tonglu*) with a span of six years. Therefore, during the Song Dynasty, there were five times the royal family was actively involved with Daoist classics with consequence of an easy production and preservation of wood-cut printing.

In the Ming Dynasty, Daoist classics acquired the title of *Encyclopedia of Daoist Classics in 1445* (*zhengtong daoizang*), 1445 being the year of orthodox

(*zhengtong*) which did not dictate any permanent attribute to the classic. So Daoist classics ever since have inherited the title of Encyclopedia of Daoist Classics.

The Earliest Three Classics

The earliest emergence of Daoist books pertinent to religious doctrines were *The Book of Grand Peace* (*taipingjing*), Meditation on Cosmic Dynamics in *the Book of Changes* (*zhouyi cantongqi*) and *Creative Expositions to the Works of Lao Zi* (*laozi xiang'er zhu*). These originative works, in spite of their exterior aspects relative to Male and Female Advocates (*yinyangjia*), Confucian ideas in *The Book of Changes* and Daoism in *The Works of Lao Zi*, were the theologies of religious Daoism in its earliest form.

The Book of Grand Peace was believed to be revealed to Daoist practitioner Gan Ji and his disciple Gong Chong by Daoist God. This work shifted from traditional clues of Male and Female and Daoism in cosmology to “Human Obligations to Heavenly Mandates” (*tianrenganying*) in the hope to provide solutions for another big social chaos in the late years of the Han Dynasty. The central ideas proposed in the work were the utopian society termed “grand peace”, which was the natural consequence in a cosmic-air-motivated process of harmonious relations between male and female, heaven, earth and human, emperors, courtiers and subjects, and all other beings in the universe. If such a process were interrupted by these confused relations, political corruption and social chaos would be ensued inevitably. For ordinary people, who were not politically ambitious in such critical moment, the world of the immortals proved to be more attractive. Therefore, *The Book of Grand Peace* offered another picture of gradual cultivation of individual practitioners, from the kind, the saint, the Daoist, the immortal, the philosopher, and ultimately to the god-like. Such principle of religious affiliation was later explained in the Ming Dynasty as “cultivating oneself by cosmic dynamics, preserving pith by taking nutrients from other channels, being effective both in inner bodily health and outer socially grand peace, getting rid of catastrophe and disease”.¹⁹ The functions and purposes of religious Daoism were thus clearly stated as “inner health pith” and “outer grand peace”, the outline of its earliest theory being basically drawn.

Meditation on Cosmic Dynamics in the Book of Changes (*zhouyi cantongqi*) was the second book in the beginning of collecting and compiling Daoist classics, which was also the first book targeting at pill making or simply being worshipped as the earliest master piece of making pills of immortality. The book had its origin in *The Book of Changes* in that the life dynamics in the universe was the

¹⁹ Bai Yunji, “Detailed Annotations to the Contents of Encyclopedia of Daoist Classics (*daozang mulu xiangzhu*),” in *The Four Categories in Chinese Cultural Essentials* (*sibu jingyao*) (Shanghai: Shanghai Classic Press, 1993), Vol. 15, p. 554.

representation of male and female in their eternal intercourse, and guided by the natural philosophy of the Yellow Emperor and Lao Zi, both believed to be Daoist immortals, and substantially complemented by refining pills in the stove, the book was accounted for as the earliest comprehensive work on refining pills. It described the ingredients, process, temperature relative to refining pills of immortality, and convinced the believers a long life after taking such pills, exercising constant influences on the following sects of pill makers in future generations of Daoists.

Creative Expositions to the Works of Lao Zi (laozi xiangerzhu) was highly possible to be the work by the religious Daoist leader, one of the earliest leaders of Five Bushel Rice (*wudoumi dao*). The importance of the book lies in that it was the first work to explain *The Works of Lao Zi* in Daoist theology, combining Lao Zi's natural philosophy with the immortal myths, turning Daoist doctrines into the practitioner's creeds. For instance, when it was stated in *The Works of Lao Zi* that Dao could never be separated from any physical being, *Creative Exposition to The Works of Lao Zi* would rather explain that cosmic air gathered in a human body to become Lao Zi the Great Master. Also, when *The Works of Lao Zi* believed that cosmic air could represent Dao, *Creative Exposition to The Works of Lao Zi* would rather explain that it was only Dao that could assure its believers to be immortal and to enjoy heavenly fortunes. Such easy and attractive annotations were purposely assorted under certain entries in *The Works of Lao Zi* which were extremely favorable to those rebellious followers of basically lower social class.

The Mainstay of the Daoist Classics

These classics are different from the above mentioned works which were basically written or compiled by those religious Daoists, being formally the works of those philosophical thinkers before religious Daoism emerged in the late years of the Han Dynasty. Such classics belonged to the category of Hundred Schools of Thought in the pre-Qin Dynasty and they were philosophies or politics of those creative thinkers concerned, which were added by some other following works suggested by their clues or being explored into their elucidated religious messages under different titles. The following are typical of them.

True Classic to The Works of Lao Zi (daode zhenjing). The classic is what was usually regarded written by Lao Zi in 5000 words. The religious Daoists compiled it in a different title meant to show their religious commitment to *The Works of Lao Zi*, the original content remained basically unchanged. Since it expounded on the concepts of Dao (cosmic dynamics) and De (cosmological representations) as well as "Dao models itself after nature", religious Daoists found in it the spiritual roots and techniques to transform cosmic air into their own bodies, paralleling themselves with the cosmic eternity and attaining Dao in their lives.

True Classic to The Works of Zhuang Zi (nanhua zhenjing). The classic is what was thought of as the 33 chapters written by Zhuang Zi. From the Tang Dynasty,

the classic has been accepted as main source book for the immortal scholarship. But religious Daoists were particularly attentive to its contents in universal beings integrated into one, Daoist mentality transcending all physical differences, sitting in meditation for empty immensity, identifying with cosmic air and cultivating into the immortals.

The Works of Yellow Central Color (huangtingjing). This classic was focused on accumulating cosmic air in practitioner's belly, housing the condensed and refined cosmic air in lower belly like a yellow gold that never get rustic and deteriorated. It depicted different parts inside human body to nurse and refine cosmic air, and finally attained the best results in storing the cosmic air sustaining the practitioner forever like a cosmos person.

The Works of Conversion (durenjing). This classic was written in much visible sense from Buddhist sutras that help convert its adherents. In the late years of the Eastern Jin Dynasty, the book was proclaimed to be the revelation from Daoist universe creator, accentuating the principle of Daoist long-life anticipation and passionate salvation, convincing its believers of reaching Daoist paradise by citing Daoist classics, abiding by Daoist precepts and converting themselves and others.

The Works of Cosmological Subtlety (yinfujing) or *The Works of Cosmological Subtlety to Yellow Emperor (huangdi yinfujing)*, very short essay around 300 words appeared in the Wei and Jin Dynasties and got its popular readership mainly in the Tang Dynasty. It combined the natural philosophy of Daoism and individual cultivating skills of religious Daoism. Based on the interactions between heaven, earth, and human as well as the interactions between male and female in a creative process of five cosmic elements (*yinyang wuxing xiangsheng xiangke*), the work was dedicated to a harmonious attainment of inner health care and outer country ruling, thus being parallel to *The Works of Lao Zi* and *The Works of Yellow Central Color*.

The Works of Quiet Peace (qingjingjing) or *The Works of Quiet Peace by Patriarchal Lao Zi (taishang laojun shuo changqingjing miaojing)*. Again this is another short essay around 400 words popular in the span between the Tang and Song Dynasties. It was later adopted as the morning praying verses, being engrossed in attaining quiet peace by intuitional access to constant Dao in the universe.

Daoist Works in Seven Categories (yunji qiqian) was reputed as “*Micro-Encyclopedia of Daoist Classics (xiaodaozang)*”, which selected and compiled the extracts from the Three Grottoes (*sandong*) and Four Supplements (*sifu*) into a new system in seven categories, its themes covering the areas of Daoist doctrines, legends, histories, health care, cultivating techniques, refining both inner and outer pills, magic spells and praying sacrifice, biographies of the immortals, etc. Many valuable Daoist classics before the Song Dynasty were well preserved and passed on to later readers by this classic system and it commanded wide encouraging recommendations.

The Works to the Enlightened Truth (wuzhenpian) was written by Zhang Boduan in the early Song Dynasty. The author spotlighted his ambition in explaining how to obtain the “golden pills” in line with the philosophy of interactive male *yang*

and female *yin* in a universal evolution, an intellectual expansion from the basic clues of *The Works of Lao Zi* and *The Works of Cosmological Subtlety*. His priority of outer cultivation in social context over inner cultivation within one's body helped alter the refining pills in solitude, convincing Daoist believers their initiatives in social context witnessing themselves as the accessible and realistic immortals. Thus, a sustained and concerted influence was exerted on later disciples of The Omnitruth Daoism (*quanzhendao*).

To Understand Chinese Through Religious Daoism

An observation and comment on religious Daoism through Chinese spiritual history has been frequently referred to by both domestic and foreign scholars concerning Lu Xun, a courageous thinker and influential writer in the first half of the twentieth century, which stated: "There have been many occasions that Chinese Monks, Nuns, Muslims, Christians are much less favored in China than Chinese Daoist believers. Whoever comprehends the reason behind this cultural predilection commands the basic sense of China".²⁰ His observation carries sense in that religious Daoism is the indigenous to China and has been intimate to Chinese from the very base satisfying each individual in his or her immediate expectation to pursue an attainably happy life, despite its fallacies in terms of modern science and technique. The faith in the immortals in religious Daoism has been sustaining Chinese scholarship in the form of refining pills and national history in the form of civil spiritual teachers. As peculiar type of culture, religious Daoism has been amazingly attributive to the breath control exercise of various forms that every Chinese comprehends to certain degrees in their daily lives and to self-adaptations in either spiritual, biological or social contexts proportionately harmonious.

As disclosed in the cosmological procession, Dao has been religiously explored in Chinese tradition as witchcrafts, worship, self-cultivation, becoming the immortal, blessed health, grand peace, and storing the pills of immortality. Therefore, it justifies Chinese nation, as any nation in the world with their traditional faith and peculiar spirituality, in their comprehending and exploring cosmological entity, intellectual transcendence, and personal happiness. Their ultimate concerns exhibited in life eternity of the immortals have been significantly dynamic in striking the balance between the inner health preserving and the outer social justice which can timely be transformed into social morality consolidating its believers in both individual and social affairs.

Addressing its tradition and modern transformation, Prof. Chen Yinke, another prestigious Chinese thinker of historical insight in the twentieth century, contrasted religious Daoism with imported Chinese Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism

²⁰ Lu Xun, "Little Thoughts in Moderate Collections (*eryiji xiaozagan*)", in *The Complete Works of Lu Xun* (*luxun quanji*). (Lasa: Tibetan People's Press, 1998), p. 447.

in an academic prediction: “I can humbly foresee a pessimistic outcome for a kind of devoted introduction into China from North America or East Europe, which could be assumed no better than Vijnanavada introduced into China by Xuan Zang (*tangseng* in popular readers), declined into oblivion for its being marginalized in the process of Chinese thoughts. An intellectual system cannot be creatively transformed unless it deeply rooted in its indigenous tradition in incorporating alien scholarship within its own. Indigenous and alien thoughts could be superficially opposite, but they may also be complementary in essential, and this compensatory integration has been exposed in the interactive history of Chinese nation and other nations in the previous 2000 years, seen either as the true spirit of religious Daoism and the ancient approaches of Neo-Confucianism”.²¹ By his comments, we come to realize that religious Daoism has been open to all alien religions like Indian Buddhism, Persian Manichaeism, and European Jesuits, etc., in borrowing some of their doctrines and institutions while keeping its chief doctrines sticking to its own peculiarity. Both religious Daoism and Neo-Confucianism have been remaining their Chineseness at core despite all borrowed alien facets in various forms or to certain degrees, for Chinese descendents have never been alienated from the conviction of Dragon Offspring (*longdechuanren*), and if religious Daoism can still finds its anonymous affiliates one could sense the popular saying: One could be happier than the immortal life with a cigarette after meal.

²¹ Chen Yinke, “Recommendation Comments on History of Chinese Philosophy by Feng Youlan”, in *The History of Chinese Philosophy* by Feng Youlan. (Taipei: Taiwan Commercial Press, 1983), Vol. II, p. 1208.

Chapter 7

The Buddha Nature Theory and It's Social Value

Introduction

The contribution of Chinese Chan (or *Zen*) School to Buddhism is not only confirmed in its methodology of intuitional enlightenment, but also should be associated to its new perspective to Buddha nature which justifies its peculiar way to individual enlightenment. Traditional Indian Buddhism emphasized the solitude of Buddha nature, but Chinese Chan masters shifted this emphasis to the awareness of Buddha nature, highlighting the initiative originality of Buddha nature. This emphasis integrated ontology with value orientation of traditional Buddhism, thus cogently explained the inter correlativeness among the awareness of Buddha nature, reflective meditation, and intuitional enlightenment.

Buddhism is a world religion with enduring history, peaceful emigration, and alien renovation. After its introduction into China, Indian Buddhism had been witnessing the reformative and creative phases of Tian Tai, Hua Yan and Fa Xiang Wei Shi Zong and some other smaller schools of Buddhist thought in China, before it was transformed into a brand new Buddhism as Chinese Zen Buddhism initiated by Master Hui Neng (638–713). This Chinese Buddhism has been worldly renowned as Zen Buddhism since its establishment in Chinese Tang Dynasty (618–907) and began its international journey to Korea and Japan on a large scale. These introduced Zen Buddhisms, again integrated with local cultures there, gradually being turned into Korean Buddhism and Japanese Buddhism of their respective features. Retrospectively, Buddhism, as a world religion with a peculiar history from its original country to its emigrated countries, had to acknowledge the revolutionary role of Chinese Zen Buddhism for its endurance and international expansion, a role manifested in its combination of subjectively-realized Buddha nature and simplified method of sudden enlightenment.

Universality of Buddha Nature

The realization of Buddha nature in every individual by sudden enlightenment advocated in Chinese Zen Buddhism proves to be universal attraction as philosophy of life and manifests itself as the ultimate in social value. Being philosophy of life and ultimate social value, Zen Buddhism in China also faces the task to build a theory as the base of its faith. As has been largely agreed, the theoretical base of Zen Buddhism in China should be built on a form of universality explainable to all lives in the universe. This universality as the base of Chinese Buddhism is usually accepted and termed as Buddha nature theory. According to the mega tradition in world religions, the universal value is demonstrated either by its own natural being such as Buddha nature or revealed by the Other such as Christian sacred calling. In Christian tradition the universal value revealed by God is simply the manifestation of relationship between the Creator and its creature, so the first few pages in the Bible narrate the completion of the universe at a single sitting. The whole creation is not brain-demandingly complicated but merits its acceptance as miracles. In contrast, Buddhism displays a different picture of universe, that is, as a universal value Buddha nature exists everywhere of its own accord, devoid of any miracle to nullify our comprehension. So human beings, as the most sensible and intelligent species in all universal sentient beings, are given full freedom for their own reflection, and the pursuit to the ultimate reason of universe becomes a must for Buddhist masters. Therefore, we have to accept a very complicated and brain challenging theory in Buddha nature when it is applied to the creation of the universe or even to a single sentient being. Buddhist masters have this saying that Buddha nature is the ontology of its own existence, universally scattered in any possible space and at any possible time. Its ubiquitous presence defies the unimaginable numbers of beaches' sand of the Ganges River. It reveals no vestiges of miracles but appears to sight as any universal natural being. Such statement on Buddha nature is both simple and natural, short of theoretical charms. Evidently, such statement about Buddha nature would not easily carry its sense to a popular readership.

The application of Buddha nature intended for universe is simple by faith but intricate by comprehension, so different types of explanation emerged among Buddhist masters in the Tang Dynasty. One representative explanation is to state that Buddha nature must be confirmed by the interconnection between life and death indigenous to everything, or otherwise the theory could be repudiated by its own plausible arguments. This theory or explanation, though popular and seemingly argumentative, distinguishes itself by the interconnection between life and death pertinent to observable natural world, but nevertheless exposes itself to the differentiation between life and death, and this differentiation in turn will spoil the sacred transcendence on which religious metaphysics invariably depends. Master Hui Neng, known as the initiator and the Sixth Patriarch of Chinese Zen Buddhism, repudiated this correlation between life and death, and between action and inaction as perverted fringe (*bian jian*), its Buddha nature being far from the

transcendence of both life and death. Such theory focused on differentiating life from death, commented by Hui Neng, intends either to abolish life by death or to stress death by life, confining itself in contrast and difference, falling short of the *emptiness* proposed by the “School of Middle Way” (Madhyamika) of Mahayana Buddhism. In the final analysis, the death revealed in such theory is not the metaphysical one, neither is the life, leaving the theory itself full of paradox and dilemma. Hui Neng explains his repudiation by stating that the universality in Buddha nature is seen in its meditative solitude, transcending the difference between right and wrong; and being universal, Buddha nature is eternally existent, transcending the differentiation between life and death. He asserts:

“What I believe to be transcending life and death does not have a life, so death being a none-partner, and this explanation of mine distinguishes itself from the perverted fringe. If you want to sense my tenet, just abstain yourself from the differentiation between good and evil, and by doing so you could naturally reside on metaphysical serenity, which is silently functioning limitless as accounting the numbers of sand on the beaches of the Ganges River.”¹

He is certain that Buddha nature bears universal feats beyond the explanation of neither life nor death, and that Buddha nature means transcendental serenity beyond the differentiation between right and wrong, and between good and evil. These two aspects of Buddha nature in Hui Neng’s comprehension are the original explanations contributed to traditional Indian Buddhism, and the master monks in Chinese Zen Buddhism always hold these congenially agreeable to Buddhist intrinsic doctrine.

But, by our direct observation everything in the universe involves the process of life and death, and we also believe that Buddha nature constitutes the essence for all things in the universe. So why could we not accept the statement that the universality of Buddha nature is definitely associated with the process of life and death? And such suspicion also proves to be a harsh challenge to Chinese Zen masters. In my apprehension span, however, Chinese Zen masters might defend their argument this way, that is, the succession of life and death is not essentially the process of life and death, it is the illusion of Buddha nature only. When approaching Buddha nature, it is, by essence, only the natural existence despite its external and false phenomena of life and death. This explanation could seem convincing to the Buddhist scholars who are versed in the cosmology of Dependent Origination (*yuanqi*). Nevertheless, those who take illusory things as reality are easy to fall victims to superficial phenomenon, and consequently Chinese Confucian scholars whose philosophy is typically “this-worldly” often come under attack of Zen Buddhists. A Zen Buddhist anecdote (*gong an*) writes this way:

“Once Li Ao, then the Ding Zhou local official, wanted to learn Buddhist metaphysical truth from Zen Master Wei Yan, but his official invitation were consecutively declined before he had to visit the Master in person. When he

¹ Hui Neng, *Platform Scripture of the Sixth Patriarch*, edit. and interpreted by Wei Daoru, (Xi an: San Qin Press, 2002), Chap. 9, p. 285.

arrived at the gate of the Meditation Hall, the Master purposely engaged himself in reading Buddhist sutras. The steward of the official could not help shouting at the Master: 'Here is your local official!' Li Ao, a hot-tempered Confucian official, made an offensive remark on the Master: 'To see him with my eyes is to realize how my ears have been fooled' Then he retreated rather disappointed. At this moment, the Master slowly responded: 'Why should you depend on your ears rather than your eyes?' The official was amazed by the question, and demanded in his respect: 'Dear Master, could you be so kind as to show me the way to metaphysical doctrine?' The Master did not bother answering but simply pointed up and down with his finger and then challenged the visiting local official: 'Comprehend what it means?' The official answered promptly: 'No.' The Master then explained a little bit: 'This means clouds in the sky and water in the bottle.' At this, the visiting official seemed to understand what the Buddhist metaphysical doctrine might be by chanting in agreement: 'The Master has cultivated himself into a crane, the case between us is just like two lanes in deep pine trees. When I came for universal truth, the answer is revealed by clouds in the sky and water in the bottle.' The visiting official went on with question: 'What are the doctrines of precept, meditation and wisdom?' But the Master repudiated such inquiry: "I do not have such idle furniture in my humble hall." Li Ao, rather confused about this, did not follow what the Master was hinting at. And again the Master perplexed him by ambiguous sentences: 'My honorable guest, if you want to maintain this metaphysical value of Buddha, you should manage to stand on the top of mountain and swim deep at the sea (to evaluate the beauty of nature). To be official in the secular world it to be torturing by gain and loss.' So observing the Master sitting in his room, Li Ao retorted: 'What is the purpose of your sitting in the Meditation Hall? (since you mocked at me sitting in my official position)' The Master replied in calm: 'My body sitting here is the embodiment of Buddha nature, it transcends physically coming and going(in contrast, your position as official in society can be nominated and removed).'²

Li Ao is well-known Confucian scholar in the Tan Dynasty, whose philosophical reflection is expressed in "the restoration of universal nature", insisting on "universal nature reveals the mandate of heaven", "all human beings are the same kind by their universal nature" and "there is no difference between the nature of the saints and ordinary civilians". His thesis on universal nature and the heaven's mandate bear much in common with the universality and equality of Buddha nature. Despite the fact that Confucianism and Buddhism have the difference between "this-worldly" politics and "worldly-emptiness" of dependent origination, they nevertheless share a great similarity in a theory of universal and equal nature. The above-cited anecdote from *Five Genealogies of Chinese Chan Buddhism (wudenghuiyuan)* can tell the difference between Confucianism and

² Pu Ji, "Prefect & Lay Buddhist Li Ao," in *Five Genealogies of Chinese Chan Buddhism (wu deng hui yuan)* (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 1984), Vol. 1, pp. 278–179.

Buddhism in their perspectives on social affairs and also can show us the common features they have in expounding universal nature and Buddha nature. Confucianism is this-worldly, so its adherents have obvious tendency for official positions, with Li Ao as its typical case. But Buddhism is quite another type of faith system, to negate everything in the doctrine of onto-emptiness and by way of dependent origination. So no “official”, no invited guest, and even no answer agrees with their principle of Buddha nature, they all being illusory phenomena. From the epistemology of dependent origination, the world consisted of phenomena is nothing but emptiness in terms of universal nature. The application of epistemological onto-emptiness by Master Wei Yan did seriously offend the self-respect of Confucian official like Li Ao, nullifying both his social position, and worldly concerns. To Li Ao, Master Wei Yan is nothing more than an ordinary monk, that is “to see him with my eyes is to realize how my ears have been fooled”. But the Master reminded him “depending more on your eyes than ears”. He might have hinted at what had been heard by ears can certainly be noble and sacred, since they are actually separated from physical beings, something like metaphysical reputation separated from physical performances of a person, so such reputation can either be exaggerated or misleading. To the Master, Buddha nature is universal only because it is associated with physical beings like the person we see with our eyes instead of his reputation we hear from our ears. Chinese Zen Buddhism focuses on the revelation of tit for tat communication (*jifeng*), so Li Ao meant to confirm the revelation about Buddhist truth, or the universal nature by explicit sentence: “What is the Buddha nature?” Upon this, Master Wei Yan just pointed up and down with his finger. “Pointing up and down with his finger” is a very popular story in the history of Zen Buddhist anecdotes, to say that when Sakyamuni was born he pointed up to the sky with one finger and down to the earth with another finger, walked around seven steps, looked around himself, then said: “Up in the sky as well as under the heaven, I am the only one to be respected. (*tianshang tianxia, weiwo duzun*)”³ Although this is a popular and authentic story about Sakyamuni which also employed to insinuate Buddha nature, still I have to be critical about it. In my comprehension, the statement “I am the only one to be respected” in the universe contradicts blatantly the metaphysical reality which advocates the transcendence over the commitments both to Dharma and Self-identity (*fazhi yu wozhi*) To me, “Up in the sky as well as under the heaven” or the universe could be the most conspicuous commitment to Dharma, “I am the only one to be respected” Self-Identity. In the Indo-European language system, top-down could mean controlling everything at the highest levels, similarly pointing up and down could insinuate in Indian Buddhist tradition the controlling the universe by its nature. But here I see its paradoxical law functioning within its own logic. In Buddhist epistemology, universe is conceptually exclusive to the term of universe itself, meaning maximum in both space and time leaving nothing even the

³ Pu Ji, “Seven Buddhists, Biography of Sakyamuni,” in *Five Genealogies of Chinese Chan Buddhism* (*wu deng hui yuan*) (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 1984), Vol. 1, p. 4.

term “universe” outside. So universe as a term contradicts abruptly its own definition transcending all normative descriptions including universe in physical term. So in Buddhist tradition, universe is logically beyond all verbal descriptions, and in consequence “finger pointing up and down” is frequently borrowed to transmit the similar message of universe instead of verbal vehicle subject to murder its own immensity of metaphysical sense. That is exactly what words will definitely victimize their true senses meant in Buddhist logical (*yanyu daoduan*). And one Buddhist classic explains it more explicitly: “By applying no words one can really come to the truth of Dharma” (*naizhi wuyou wenzi yuyan, shi zhenru buerfamen*)⁴. For scholars who are familiar with history of Chinese philosophy or Chinese religion, the anecdote of Monk Ju Zhi in intuitional enlightenment with Dharma by his finger cut off reminds them of a vivid example of comprehending universal nature in terms of experiencing Dharma (*wudao*). As for the Buddha nature by means of “finger pointing”(one of the most popular Zen Buddhist classics is named exactly as *the Recorded Anecdotes of Finger Pointing at Moon [zhiyuelu]*), Master Wei Yan further hinted at “clouds in the sky and water in the bottle”, which means the natural phenomena like clouds in the sky, water in the bottle, and grasses, trees, mountains, and valleys are the observable articles with universal nature at their respective essence, and that what Buddha nature means. If one understands the surrounding natural world this way, one really grasps the quintessence of things. Here the Zen Master implied the universality of Buddha nature in all daily observable things, relieving the official from any physical commitment even commitment to Buddha nature. Buddha nature will not be regarded as idle furniture only in that they are applied in justifying all things in the natural world. Or otherwise it remains an idle and senseless transcendent concept. By exploiting Buddhist metaphor, Master Wei Yan managed to reveal what Buddha nature really meant to Li Ao, that is, all things from the top of mountain to the deep of seas being the embodiment of Buddha nature. Compared with this Dharma-oriented cosmology, the secular and physical reputation and official position intended by Confucian scholars are not worthy aspiring at. Wei Yan’s anecdote here exhibits the Buddhist doctrine of emptiness (*shunyata*) in satirizing Confucian doctrine of post and fame exemplified in Li Ao.

While stressing the universality of Buddha nature, Chinese Buddhist scholars also acquainted themselves with a new methodology of becoming Buddha, and this used to be one of the chief concerns of Chinese scholars. This concern for Buddhist philosophy of life is confirmed by the reflections upon Buddha nature and Prajnā by Buddhist Dao Sheng. In Buddhist philosophical tradition, Buddha nature is employed mainly to explain cosmological ontology while the Theory of Becoming Buddha the philosophy of life. Both Buddha nature and Becoming Buddha should be unified as a cohesive theory, that is, the unification between

⁴ “Coming to the truth of Dharma (*bu er famen pin*),” in *Vimalakirti Nirdeśa Sutra* (*weimojie suo shuo jing*), trans. by Kumārajīva and annotated by Dao Sheng, (Beijing: China Social Science Press, 1994), p. 194.

world outlook and outlook on life. But how could they be unified? Generally, the unification between world outlook and outlook on life depends largely on intermediate function of epistemology. Then, what is the epistemology in Buddhist tradition? Definitely, the Buddhist epistemology is theory of Prajnā, to be exact, the epistemology on unknowable knowledge (*boruo wuzhi lun*). But during the days when Dao Sheng began to learn Buddhist teachings, some Buddhist scholars only emphasized epistemology to the negation of Buddhist doctrine on life, that is, the scholarship on Nirvana, to cancel the onto-nature of Nirvana by the emptiness of Prajnā. Yet Dao Sheng could not tolerate this polarization between Buddhist ontology and epistemology for fear of sacrificing the truth of Buddha nature, hence spoiling the base of Buddhist philosophy of life. In my comprehension, the negation of Nirvana by Prajnā is to abolish the identity of Buddha nature (*faxingwo*) by the identity of subject-emptiness (*renwuwo*). Dao Sheng further disagreed with the polarization between ontology and epistemology, for he was fully aware that this polarization would pose danger to completely destroy Buddha nature and in the end eradicate Buddha nature. Buddhism, of course, would remain no more a religion without its outlook on life or its Nirvana, for there is no philosophy in the world only with its epistemology. In other words, if there were no outlook on life based on everyone's becoming Buddha, there would be no Buddhism at all. In the same line, if there were no Buddha nature, there would be no justification for becoming Buddha; if there were no justification for becoming Buddha, Prajnā or Buddhist epistemology would have no substance for their formal knowledge or no media to transmit knowledge. By establishing the relation between the universality of Buddha nature and the philosophy of life (like self-salvation), Dao Sheng rectified the muddy thinking to abolish Buddha nature. He stated clearly:

“Truth can not be eradicated just by its own identity of emptiness, so self-identity means emptiness no more than onto, it committing nothing to self-identity. No commitment to self-identity means one transcending life and death, but not transcending the self-identity of Buddha nature.”⁵

That is to say, the truth revealed by Buddha nature could not be regarded as emptiness just because of its self-identity. The truth of Buddha nature and self-identity are the unified body, and when we say Buddha nature we mean its universality; when we say self-identity we mean the embodiment of Buddha nature in phenomenal things. The negation of self-identity is introduced to describe the constant changes of phenomenal things, not to nullify self-identity, but to nullify the identity of phenomenal things. So we are not guaranteed by the negation of self-identity to erase Buddha nature. The identity of Buddha nature is drastically different from its phenomenal things, the acknowledgement of Buddha nature is far from commitment to self-identity (*wozhi*), but confirmation to the solitude of

⁵ See Dao Sheng, “Annotations to *Vimalakirti Nirveda Sutra* (*weimojie suo shuo jing*),” in Fang Litian, *Chinese Buddhist Philosophy* (Beijing: The Renmin University Press, 1991), p. 40.

Buddha nature. Commitment to self-identity always comes to the acknowledgment of phenomenal things, because the identity of phenomenal things invariably depends on some other conditions than itself, so such things do not have their own independent existences, and their existences are the demonstration of Buddha nature in essence. Dialectically, Buddha nature is not confined to certain phenomenal things because of its universality, to these phenomenal and changeable things Buddha nature is emptiness, but this emptiness promises its maximum liberty to be the essence for boundless scope of phenomenal things. That is the Buddha-nature-oriented cosmology of Buddhism, known as Truth buried in Emptiness and Universality exhibited in All (*zhenkong miaoyou*). Therefore, we can be assured that Buddha nature is universal by essence, not to be cancelled by Prajñā as commitment to self-identity, and it proves to be the logical substance to witness the ultimate value of Buddha nature. And this also promised Dao Sheng in his famous statement:

“All sentient beings are destined to become Buddha.”⁶

This statement can certainly be apprehended as a theoretical contribution to Chinese Buddhism by combining Prajñā-oriented epistemology with Buddha-nature-oriented ontology and Becoming-Buddha-oriented philosophy of life. His reflection on these tough issues concerning Prajñā, onto-emptiness, and becoming Buddha paved a way for Sudden Enlightenment (*dunwu*) in Hui Neng when he initiated a new school of Buddhism in China, that is, Chinese Chan Buddhism.

Self-Awareness of Buddha Nature

On the compromise among Buddha nature, Becoming Buddha and Prajñā made by Dao Sheng, the pioneer Chinese Buddhist scholar, and Hui Neng, the Sixth Patriarch of Chinese Zen Buddhism, expounded Buddha nature in a more revolutionary perspective. His interpretation on Buddha nature is on the self-awareness exhibited on human beings rather than on its own universal solitude. And his interpretation on Buddha nature introduced a turn in Chinese Buddhism from traditional external path to a new internal path, that is, every practitioner could depend on his own inner sense to become Buddha by way of intuitional enlightenment instead of external dependence on reading scriptures, sitting in meditation, visiting other temples, and even becoming monks.

Buddha nature, according to Hui Neng, usually expresses itself in human beings in two levels, that is, the level of constant and self-aware onto and the level of external observable phenomenon. These two levels are unified as a coherent body, so we could not commit ourselves to those observable phenomena to the oblivion

⁶ See Dao Sheng, “Annotations to *Saddharmapundarikasūtra (miaofa lianhuaqing shu)*,” in Fang Litian, *Chinese Buddhist Philosophy* (Beijing: The Renmin University Press, 1991), p. 40.

of our own self-aware identity. Through confirming the Buddha nature in his self-aware identity, one can be free from being cheated by observable phenomena, he can therefore be conscious of both onto as emptiness and phenomenon as its application, becoming Buddha by demonstrative feeling its nature (*mingti dayong, jianxing chengfo*). This is what Hui Neng briefed in elaboration:

“It is in human nature that sees no commitment, so we should not commit ourselves to speculation on previous, current and future observable things, for they are in constant change; if we confine our commitment only to observable things at certain period, we thus fail to see the whole picture of Buddha identity and its relation with phenomenon concerned. Our speculation should be focused on eternal identity of Buddha nature, to be free from all interferences of observable things. If our speculation once directs to any observable thing in illusion, then all our speculations are spoilt in this direction to physical beings, this can be called enslavement by things in illusion. Commit oneself to nothing, even to speculation on emptiness, then one is totally liberated from all possible confinements, and this can be achieved by zero-oriented commitment.”⁷

“Commitment” appeared in this passage is amusing with two aspects, one denoting observable things as physical beings, the other unobservable but speculative as metaphysical Being. Commitment or speculation associated with time such as “previous, current and future” are observable things in orientation, victimizing human speculation on illusory aspects of Buddha nature in human beings, since human beings as flesh and blood are only the verification of Buddha nature in human species. They are the phenomena in the expression of essence, so “if the commitment to phenomenon is suspended, its Buddha nature disappeared from observation”. Therefore, the commitment both to Buddha nature and its phenomenon is dialectical, no one can be verified without the other, and this is what we call retrieving Buddha nature by its illusory phenomena instead of being caged by it.

Why the Buddha nature in human body can transcend all commitments? The reason is that human nature, a specific one of Buddha nature, is self aware and subjectively initiative. That is also what human wisdom connotes. It is the Buddha nature expressed in human self-conscience and inner spiritual dynamics, immune from external phenomena:

“I am determined to salvage all sentient beings”, Kalyana Mitra (spiritual friends), this does not mean I, Hui Neng, who has the boundless capacity to salvage, but that the universal Buddha nature at each human heart salvages himself. What is the self salvage by self Buddha nature? If one commits himself only to his physical body, he will find himself besieged by evil and fallacious perplexities. If he depends on his self-aware identity or his Buddha nature, he will find himself fully blessed by wisdom, and this wisdom arisen from his innermost self-identity is the confirmation of Prajnā, which performs the miracle of self-salvation

⁷ Hui Neng, *Platform Scripture of the Sixth Patriarch* (*liuzu tanjing*) (Dunhuang Version), edited and annotated by Guo Peng (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 1983, p. 32.

by enlightening those who used to be foolishly committed. Justice salvages being evil, enlightenment salvages being narrowly committed, wisdom salvages being foolish, kindness salvages being vicious, Bodhi salvages being confused, and salvage in this line means true salvage”.⁸

Why human being could retrieve to his own heart, Buddha nature in specific form, in becoming Buddha? Hui Neng believes that the reason lies exactly in the qualification of self-awareness, that is, the Buddha nature expressed in human being is not only *existent*, but also *self-initiative*, therefore can *ultimately salvage himself*. With this theoretical prerequisite, the methodology proposed by Hui Neng in intuitional enlightenment would seem more convincing.

Yet, Hui Neng must base his explanation on concrete situation. On one hand, he insists on the self-awareness at each human heart to self-salvage via sudden intuitional enlightenment, on the other, he also notices that the same person with self-awareness at heart still needs the external stimulus to realize his salvation, yet leaving the worry that this stimulus might become another hindrance to the full play of one's self-awareness. This constitutes a dilemma for Hui Neng and also a challenge to his explanation on self-initiated Buddha nature. For the better understanding this dilemma and challenge, we chose one paragraph from two different versions of *Platform Scripture of the Sixth Patriarch* (*liuzu tanjing*) to analyze their subtle features.

The first paragraph is taken from the Transcribed Version of Dun Huang by Fa Hai:

“Kalyana Mitra (spiritual friends), When I was a disciple under the Fifth Patriarch Hong Ren, I was enlightened to see Buddha nature by his one-word stimulus. It is the sudden path to the enlightenment of Buddha nature. The patriarship thus was passed on me to sustain generations to come in pursuit of Bodhi via sudden enlightenment. Such enlightenment on Bodhi is the direct exposition of universal Buddha nature in everyone. If one can not get totally enlightened by his Buddha nature, he should resort to great Kalyana Mitra for his suggestion. Who are the great Kalyana Mitra? They are the ones who are versed with the greatest vehicle and who can show us perfect path to Buddha nature. It is the greatest dependent origination that caused the process of cosmological evolution and made Buddha nature suggestive. All demonstrative paths to Buddha nature are dependent on Kalyana Mitra. What have been revealed by Buddhas of the Three Worlds and the Sutras in twelve categories are indigenous to human self-identity. For those who are not able to gain self enlightenment they have to depend on Kalyana Mitra to suggest; for those who take initiative to gain enlightenment they may relieve themselves from all mundane afflictions. If you indulge yourself in commitment and stick to fallacious opinions, your salvation will never occur despite of the teachings of Kalyana Mitra. If your self-enlightenment does not occur, you should refer yourself to Prajnā. The moment you get yourself involved with Prajnā, all fallacious opinions disappear, the equal result occurs when

⁸ Hui Neng, *Platform Scripture of the Sixth Patriarch* (*liuzu tanjing*) (Dunhuang Version), edited and annotated by Guo Peng (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 19830, p. 44.

enlightened by Kalyana Mitra. One's Buddha nature, when stimulated by external wisdom, gains a thorough demonstration; the gaining of self-identity means salvation, thus the Samadhi (mental concentration) achieved. The attainment of Samadhi means none-commitment. What does none-commitment mean? None-commitment means transcending all commitments and all phenomena. In this mental state one's Buddha nature remains constantly undisturbed, and the physical six thieves(eyes, ears, noses, tongue, body and mind) fail to harm you by six dusts(color, sound, smell, taste, feel and object). So this Samadhi brings a spiritual free travel to you, no commitment to your mind and confinement to your action. If one intends to stop thinking about observable things, he does not necessarily attain mental transcendence, since he is likely confined by thinking Dharma, still a commitment to non-commitment. One who attains Dharma by sudden path can apprehend universal Dharma, achieve all Buddha mentalities and ultimately transform into Buddha himself." (Chap. 31)

The paragraph with much similar sentences appears in the *Platform Scripture of the Sixth Patriarch* of Cao Xi version (seen in Prajñā, Chap. 2), but in the *Platform Scripture of the Sixth Patriarch*, Dunhuang Version, edited and annotated by Guo Peng,⁹ I discover two sentences open for further arguments. In his sentence separation (for Classic Chinese, sentences are not separated by written form, but by verbal reading), the editor separated in part of the paragraph as "Who are the great Kalyana Mitra? They are the ones who are versed with the greatest vehicle and who can show us perfect path to Buddha nature. It is the greatest dependent origination that caused the process of cosmological evolution and made Buddha nature suggestive." I reflect the sentence separation should be "the great Kalyana Mitra have the great dependent origination, that stimulated them to be versed with the greatest vehicle ..." to gear into the doctrine of dependent origination, making no exception to this doctrine even with the sixth patriarch himself. Another argument I have for Guo Peng's edited version is that the self-awareness of Buddha nature in human beings is not clearly indicated. And the dependence on Kalyana Mitra could somehow sabotage the qualification of self-enlightenment of human nature, a special Buddha nature as embodied in this self-initiated sentient being. We may logically link this paragraph with sentences Hui Neng expounded in other cases that Buddha nature indigenous to human beings as transcendent wisdom, though subject to illusion for certain cases, but invariably echoed by external stimulus or self-aware device:

"You the Kalyana Mitra, Bodhi Prajñā is inner pertinence to us. If we are misled by illusory commitments which suspend us from self-enlightenment, a subtle suggestion from the Kalyana Mitra will definitely prompt us to be wiser."¹⁰

⁹ See the *Platform Scripture of the Sixth Patriarch* (*liuzu tanjing*) (Dunhuang Version), annotated by Guo Peng (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 1983).

¹⁰ Hui Neng, *Platform Scripture of the Sixth Patriarch* (*liuzu tanjing*)(Dunhuang Version), edited and annotated by Guo Peng(Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 1983), p. 24.

Hui Neng himself also emphasizes the main reason for self-enlightenment in terms of self-identity:

“Why should I stress it as self-enlightenment by self-identity? Let me explain it this way: If we were confined only to our physical bodies, we could be disappointed and annoyed by evil opinions, afflictions and stupid commitments. Fortunately we have self-identity at heart which will salvage us from the sea of physical troubles by way of sudden enlightenment. The self-identity is expressive of Prajnā, driving away stupid commitments from all sentient beings and materializing its self-salvation.”¹¹

Here, again we can see his emphasis on the self-identity and self-awareness of human nature. Even in commenting on the Indian Dharmakaya (the Dharma body), Hui Neng did not forget to accentuate the spiritual initiative of Buddha nature instead of its purity and solitude as advocated by Indian Buddhists:

“Kalyana Mitra, wisdom is like sun while intelligence moon. They are constantly bright, but might be covered and shadowed by illusory clouds, dimming their brightness. When inspired by Kalyana Mitra, person whose self-identity is shadowed by committed fantasies could be thus salvaged, rediscovering in his self-identity all the Buddha truths. These are blessed by Buddha nature, and this is what Dharmakaya demonstrates.”¹²

Based himself on the intelligence of Buddha nature embodied in human beings, Hui Neng's explanation discloses the alienation from Indian Buddha nature in terms of its initiative instead of its solitude. This alienation gradually became apparent since Hui Neng's pioneering undertaking, and a later master scholar of Zen Buddhism Zong Mi made an influential remark in this line:

“The solitude of heart does not conceal its intelligent faculty. Only the initiative faculty of solitary heart can verify the true Buddha nature. Whether being in a state of commitment or enlightenment, the intelligent faculty of heart maneuvers of its own accord, independent of other conditions or references. And this intelligent faculty is the origin of all flexible applications of Buddha nature.”¹³

Much similar to Hui Neng, Zong Mi also takes the self-awareness as the fundamental faculty of Buddha nature, beneficial to differentiate “becoming Buddha by feeling its nature” (*jianxing chengfo*) in human beings from the solitude aspects of Buddha nature embodied in other physical illusions. The intelligent or self-aware faculty in human beings is the peculiarity of Buddha nature, thus foregrounding human nature as the origin or sources of all miracles in mundane world and reminding human beings their initiative ethically and instrumentally. Because of this intelligent faculty, human heart is transformed into universal heart as to be

¹¹ Hui Neng, *Platform Scripture of the Sixth Patriarch* (*liuzu tanjing*) (Dunhuang Version), edited and annotated by Guo Peng (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 1983), p. 44.

¹² See “Platform Scripture of the Sixth Patriarch, Cao Xi Version, Chap. 6,” in Bu Hui and Yan Shu, *Buddhist Sutras in Modern Chinese* (*baihua fojing*) (Beijing: China Social Science Press, 1991), p. 54.

¹³ See “Part 2, Vol. 1. Preface to Collections of Zen Buddhist Documents,” in Fang Litian, *Chinese Buddhism and Traditional Culture* (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Press, 1988), p. 281.

responsible for universal harmony, or great compassion for all beings in the universe. That's why individual human heart can be echoed with universal heart, so to become Buddha by sudden enlightenment can be called "passage from heart to Heart" (*yixin chuanxin*), human heart partakes in the dynamics of universe, its self-awareness discloses the messages of universal Heart shared by all forms of existence in the world.

Social Value of Buddha Nature in Chan Scholarship

The social value of Zen scholarship in illuminating Buddha nature is demonstrated in its equality. The equal qualification of Buddha nature in Chinese Zen Buddhism can be further justified in accordance with social circumstances in China. Of course, we all have this picture in mind that epistemology-oriented Prajñā and Buddha-nature-oriented Nirvana were introduced into China as Buddhism from India, but what has been inherited in a reformed type of Buddhism in China is the Nirvana accompanied by a sudden-enlightenment methodology, that is, the enduring effect upon Chinese adherents came from Buddha nature theory and the mainstay of Chinese Buddhism is Zen sect based on sudden enlightenment of Chinese origination. These are the academic message of sinofication of Buddhism, or the particular significance of Buddha nature theory in Chinese society.

Relating to the social aspect, we have to acknowledge that traditional Chinese society was as cruel and conservative as Indian caste, but latter had been sustaining longer and thus caused greater damages to society than Chinese one, especially in the dimension of human nature. So the reflections in China had been more sophisticated, enduring, and systematic. These intellectual feats are mainly manifested in Buddha nature theory focusing on the equality of all sentient beings, and they are also the chief attractions to Chinese society. Before Indian Buddhism was introduced into China on a large scale, China had witnessed her own system of clan hierarchy (*menfa zhidu*) which caused serious damages to social harmony and justice. The clan hierarchy, characterized as "high social positions are not open for persons of lower social status, lower social positions are disdained by persons of higher social status (*shangpin wu hanmen, xiapin wu shizu*)", suffocated the dynamic spirituality from the masses. But, with the doctrine of equality in Buddha nature, Chinese masses saw the possibility of social justice and ethical fairness, so they were enthusiastic about the Buddha nature theory, the spirit of equality which advocated encouraged Chinese Buddhist scholars, mainly from Zen sect, to cultivate the self-awareness of Buddha nature, constituting a solid intellectual ground for becoming Buddha and self-salvation for each individual regardless of their social status.

In a very popular Buddhist anecdote named "even stone nods agreement with Dao Sheng's preaching (*shengong shuofa, wanshi diantou*)", we are conscious that Buddha nature even did not forsake itself to the evil like "icchantika" (the most base and spiritually deluded of all types of being) still possesses chance to

become Buddha. So the universal value in Buddhist salvation shed more light on those living at lower social status or marginalized from human intelligence. This spiritual solace aspired by ordinary and even illiterate masses overtakes philosophy, economics, politics, and ethics in that its faith and salvation is always readily accessible. So *the Platform Scripture* began with this story of “the butcher who lays down his sword at once becomes a Buddha” in order to help gaining a better understanding of the equal social value crucial to Buddha nature.

Hui Neng bid farewell to Master Hong Ren and departed for the South. It had been two months before he came to Da Yu Mountain, chased by hundreds of people for the patriarchship. A rude layman named Chen Huiming, who once served in the army at the fourth rank, insisted on taking the lead to catch Hui Neng. When he rushed near to his target, Hui Neng threw off the Holy Robe, the identity of Patriarchship, and hid himself in the nearby bushes. When Huiming reached for the Holy Robe, he was shocked by his being unable to lift the light robe. So he began to declare: “Faquir! Faquir! I am here for Dharma, not for the Holy Robe.” Hearing this, Hui Neng came out from the bushes and sat on his legs in front of him. Huiming bowed to him for quest: “Your holy faquir, please enlighten me with Dharma.” Hui Neng then talked to him: “Since you came for Dharma, I suggest you control your breath and stop thinking before I can enlighten you with Dharma.” Huiming followed his suggestion and sat in quietness for quite a while, then Hui Neng asked him: “To think of no good and no evil, could you then discover your original nature?” Upon this, Huiming came to a sudden enlightenment. He then inquired the monk to confirm: “Above mystical words and senses, is there additional mystical sense?” Hui Neng confirmed his inquiry: “What I told you remains no more mystical. If you could reflect upon yourself, you will certainly find mystical Dharma within you.” Huiming then realized: “Even I had been in Huangmei Temple as a monk, I did not discover Dharma with me. Now I am enlightened by your suggestion, and I can tell being hot and cold within my body as drinking water (*ru ren yinshui, lengnuan zizhi*). I therefore beg to be your disciple.” Hui Neng replied gently: “It’s very kind of you to think so. In fact we were once disciple-mates at Huangmei Temple, we should equally cherish Buddha nature then and now.” Huiming went on asking: “Where should I go henceforth?” Hui Neng answered: “You should stop at Yuan and reside at Meng.” Huiming then thanked him and left.¹⁴

This paragraph is immensely significant in Zen Buddhist tradition concerning its social value. The real picture of Hui Neng’s succession to the patriarchship is

¹⁴ See “Platform Scripture of the Sixth Patriarch, Cao Xi Version, Chap. 6,” in Bu Hui and Yan Shu, *Buddhist Sutras in Modern Chinese (baihua fojing)* (Beijing: China Social Science Press, 1991), p. 39. Another similar story in the same book (Chap. 8) also goes that an evil thug named Zhongzhi wanted to stab Hui Neng, and Hui Neng guessed his attempt and made his neck easily exposed for the coming stab, but no slightest harm ever inflicted on him. At this miracle, the thug was awakened to his own Buddha nature and converted to be a Buddhist under Hui Neng. This is another popular example of “the butcher who lays down his knife at once becomes a Buddha”, its value being the universality, equality and self-awareness of Buddha nature.

one of cold-hearted conspiracy which forced Hui Neng to flee from Huangmei Temple, where the Fifth Patriarch passed his holy position to Hui Neng. But he was threatened and chased in his southward exile. The Buddhist romance is strikingly impressive here as to let the professional military person of high rank to be the first to attain Hui Neng in person but to be converted in faith. That is the convincing story of contrastive feature for “the butcher who lays down his sword at once becomes a Buddha”. And the import of the story is obvious, that is, Buddha nature is kind, universal, and self-aware, if reflective to itself, everyone can become Buddha immediately. “I can tell being hot and cold within my body as drinking water” became one of the most frequently quoted sentences in Chinese Buddhism, and its social value lies in that Buddha nature knows no boundaries in a classified society by clan hierarchy, and lies also in equality in intellectual morality not distinguishing the based from the saints. More revolutionary exemplifications are even applied to animals, such as fearful tigers being awakened to their Buddha nature. Some of the Zen Buddhists even began to persuade that insentient beings like mountains and rivers also have their respective Buddha nature, the typical example is seen in this popular saying “Green bamboos are the very Dharmakaya, bloomy yellow flowers are nothing but Prajnā” (*qingqing cuizhu jinshi fashen, yuyu huanghua wufei boruo*).

The historical transition from the clan-hierarchy-oriented Wei and Jin Dynasties to the universal and equal Buddha-nature-oriented Sui and Tang Dynasties witnessed a drastic change of Chinese social ethos, a change from disappointment and decadence to self-confidence and mental vivacity. Under the auspices of universal Buddha nature, Chinese Zen Buddhism was looming large, Chinese politics was open and inclusive, administrative offices at different levels were comparatively fair and effective, literature and arts were tinged with liberalism and romanticism, and a mood of free, open, equal, and optimistic society was gradually gaining prominence. In a world panorama, Chinese Tang Dynasty did merit the label of “China the Grandeur (*shengtang*)”. In all these social dimensions, we can not afford to overlook the importance of Buddha nature as theory of equality and fairness.

Philosophical Sense of Buddha Nature in Chan Buddhism

The genealogy of Zen Buddhism has this statement that the Pioneer Patriarch Bodhidharma began to advocate the complete self-rooted and universal existent Buddha nature, which constitutes the justification for individual to become Buddha by his internal reflection. The story of the Second Patriarch Hui Ko in Chinese Zen Lineage is often vividly told about how Master Bodhidharma helped to justify his disciple’s heart (*huiko anxin*). Also the collections of Wu Deng Hui Yuan told another similar story of justifying heart with complete and self-existent Buddha nature in monk Xi Qian’s apprenticeship under Master Xing Si. These stories are told with the intention to expound the ontology of Buddha nature. If the

ontological message of Buddha nature can therefore be transmitted and apprehended, then the readers are easy to be exposed to its philosophical sense.

We can basically divide the ontology of Buddha nature into two aspects in line of Indian and Chinese Zen Buddhism. In the aspect of universe as a whole existential body, the Onto of Buddhist philosophy is its nature, that is, the Dharma or true reality. In the aspect of human beings, they are the most initiative and sentient beings in the universe, the Onto of Buddhist philosophy is the human heart. The unification of these two aspects is to be usually called heart-nature, so Chinese Buddhist often have these sayings as “to understand your heart is to see universal nature” (*mingxin jianxing*) and “It (the belief) goes straight into people’s hearts, one becomes a Buddha the moment he sees his own Buddha nature” (*zhizhi renxin, jianxing chengfo*). When we come to cosmology, we acknowledge that every member in the universe has its own individual and specific identity, that is, the particular onto; when we discuss the logical sense of universality, apart from being the particular onto, every member in the universe shares a general body, that is, the common onto. So the concentration either on the particular onto or the common onto makes different schools of philosophy. So in this epistemological structure, some philosophers label Buddhism as subjective idealism in line with its particular onto:

“Both religious and philosophical Buddhism believe that all in the universe are the physical expressions of a cosmic heart, but the difference of a particular heart or a universal heart produces different schools of thought. If one stresses the individual heart, he would naturally agree that each individual member has its own world instead a common world, so he is of subjective idealism. If one emphasizes a cosmic heart, its expression as universe is accordingly the common world shared by individual identity, so he is of objective idealism....Both religious and philosophical Buddhism began their cosmology and life salvation from individual Karma and Reincarnation, so what they say as heart or god are individual. And this intellectual tendency would surely lead them to subjective idealism.”¹⁵

The conclusions on the quality of Buddhism by Feng Youlan are justified by the statements such as “mountains and rivers are the creatures of heart” and “all in the universe are the physical expressions of heart”, he is reasonable to see the feature of subjective idealism in terms of cosmology. We could associate his conclusions with what Zen Buddhism advocates in some specific cases. By Chinese Zen Buddhists, all the external beings are the illusory expressions of one’s heart or mind, mountains and rivers have their senses only in the reflections of people, they are not significant as external physical beings, their significance occurs to each individual subjective observer, their objective, physical beings become meaningless at people’s hearts. Zen Buddhists often enlighten their disciples by these paradoxical sentences:

¹⁵ Feng Youlan, *The New History of Chinese Philosophy* (Beijing: People’s Press, 1986), Vol. 4, p. 215.

“Mountains and rivers are mountains and rivers. You can be lost in the same statements, and you can also be enlightened in the same statements.”

“The paddy-fields in front of the mountains are desolately forsaken, for you bought them after several deals.”

From the cosmological viewpoint of dependent origination, mountains, rivers, and paddy-fields are pseudo beings, but they have comparative significance to human mentality. If human beings are misled by the illusory physical beings of mountains, rivers, and paddy-fields, these objects are not appropriately managed as such. If human beings are enlightened at these objects, they might be managed to their full extent. If paddy-fields are desolate without market deal and agriculture they do remain paddy-fields, only when people realize to employ them as such, they are the paddy-fields in sense. So by nature, mountains, rivers, and paddy-fields are identical to human heart. This Buddhist cosmology, therefore, should be accepted as “subjective idealism”.

But the Buddha nature transmits strong message of philosophical onto, that is, being the cosmological heart it can be transformed into a common world, observable to all things illusory. This argument is coherent in that universal beings must have a common base as cosmological law, and it is articulated in *the Platform Scripture* as “Buddha nature is One for All, while All is only the embodiment of One.” (*xinghan wanfa shida, wanfa jinshi zixing*)¹⁶ If we agree that Buddha nature like a heart to reflect universal beings, then we have to accept that the creative origin of all cosmological things could be a logical One, while cosmological things as logical existence could be Many to One, a much similar explanation in the mind-set of One and Many in Plotinus. In fact, Hui Yuan, a famous Buddhist master and the pioneer of Pure Land Sect in China, pinpointed in his “Clarification on Karma” (*ming baoyinglun*) this relation between Buddha nature as common One and illusory world as Many:

“When we define the four basic elements of the universe, we intend to clarify the Onto of cosmological things. Universe diversified in things is illusory just because all these physical beings are produced from one origin, the Onto. Their appearances to our observation are like the dusts in the air, coming and going with wind, and empty in their identity.”

This logical analysis also shows a trip from epistemology to common onto or cosmological being, negating cosmological things as empty-identity by confirming a common and transcendent identity. So the ontology of Buddha nature can be approached from both cosmology and universality, but the cosmological perspective will lead to subjective idealism by focusing on individual identity for its exposition in an illusory world relative to a subjective heart, while the ontological perspective will lead to objective idealism by focusing on a common identity for its exposition in an illusory world relative to all human hearts. To my comprehension, Buddha nature is open for both idealisms in that objective idealism may

¹⁶ Hui Neng, *Platform Scripture of the Sixth Patriarch* (*liuzu tanjing*) (Dunhuang Version), edited and annotated by Guo Peng (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 1983), p. 50.

focus on the origin of universe as its highest theoretical authority and basic reasoning doctrine, while subjective idealism may shift the focus to specific function of cosmological things, especially its ethical function in motivating all sentient beings to become Buddha or to behave morally in society. What really attracts Chinese adherents is its subjective idealism, since each individual heart shares the Buddha nature to convince him in behaving morally and becoming Buddha somehow. Therefore, the philosophical value of Buddha nature is necessarily cherished in its association with individuality, subjectivity, and morality.

I am fully confident that the association between Buddha nature and individuality, subjectivity and morality provides Chinese Zen Buddhism with philosophical justification for its religious salvation expressed in “relying on human heart” and “to feel Buddha nature at heart to become Buddha”. The early advocates on Buddha nature in China proposed that “all sentient beings have their Buddha nature respectively.” I believe such proposition is not aimed at ontology but at justification for philosophy of life, that is, individual salvation, so Zen Buddhism is only a naturally consequential term (*zhuanyu*) for Buddha-nature-oriented Buddhism readily heard in the sayings as “to see Buddha nature to become Buddha” or “sudden enlightenment into Buddhahood (*dunru fodi*).”

The justification for becoming Buddha also indicates the initiative and conscious quality of human heart which requires a breakthrough in methodology, and Sudden Path (*dunwu*) actually came to meet this request. At first glance Chinese Zen Buddhism as to be credited with a new methodology as Buddhism had been introduced into China, but we should have argued the precondition of this particular path yet with one-stab-death feature (*dan dao zhi ru*, meaning free access). Sudden Path in becoming Buddha means relying on one's own heart rather than on written scriptures, apprenticeship to master monks, physical commitments such as donations, entering into Sangha or performing rituals. If heart should be so important as superior to traditional Buddhist feasible vehicles or compromise (*fangbian famen*), it must be invested with convincing and sacred justification, and this has to be Buddha nature to reach a theoretical compromise. So Buddha-nature-oriented Buddhism is not a special religious favorite to Chinese, but a necessary prerequisite to Sudden Path in Chinese Zen Buddhism. With Sudden Path as new methodology and Buddha nature as its theoretical foundation, we will still be confused with the variations of those affiliates in becoming Buddha. Do variations contradict the compromise between Sudden Path and Buddha nature? This seems to be internalized dilemma which even *the Platform Scripture* fail to tackle:

“When we apply Sudden Path, we depend on our hearts rather than external vehicles to justify our own salvation and to do away with afflictions, similar to all creeks and rivers emptying into seas, to see from our hearts the Buddha nature is to reserve water regardless of their sources of origin.”¹⁷

¹⁷ Hui Neng, *Platform Scripture of the Sixth Patriarch* (*liuzu tanjing*) (Dunhuang Version), edited and annotated by Guo Peng (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 1983), p. 56.

Yet this philosophical explanation does not apply to the variations with those, or many of them, who did not actually become Buddha. Their variations might spoil Hui Neng's Sudden Path teachings. So Hui Neng directed his explanation to a plausible argument by introducing another term of person of smaller caliber (*xiaogenqi*):

"The person of smaller caliber might be the variations to my Sudden Path teachings in that, like grasses of feeble quality, when watered by rain and blown by wind, are soaked down to death instead of steady growth."¹⁸

By his elaborating, I have to notice his own theoretical confusion. The variations in intuitional enlightenment associated with the contrast between person of smaller caliber and greater caliber in fact exclude the former from the final enlightenment, that is, the persons without salvation would eradicate the universality of Buddhist nature. The variations concerning person of smaller caliber poses a serious challenge to *the Platform Scripture*: person of greater caliber could survive the variations of sudden enlightenment, but its logical victims, the person of smaller caliber, would then murder the universality of Buddha nature. I could not help arguing with the last chanting sentences of the similar metaphor in *the Platform Scripture* itself:

"The seed of Buddha nature is rooted at the sentient heart,"

"And when soaked, it will sprout forth and grow up;"

"The flower blooms by awakening their seeds,"

"The Bodhi produces its fruit accordingly."¹⁹

Again in these sentences only sentient beings are clearly invested with Buddha nature, but how about other physical beings such as botanical and mineral beings? Their existences in the universe also witness the cosmological functions of Buddha nature, and are their embodiments associated with Sudden Path? If yes, but how? So in *the Platform Scripture* and other Zen Buddhist works we do not have sufficient documents to clarify this riddle. If person of smaller caliber and insentient beings are alienated from Sudden Path, then this alienation would murder Buddha nature for its universality. I would naturally refer this dilemma to the Ninth Patriarch Zhan Ran of Tian Tai Sect in his doctrine of "insentient beings invested with Buddha nature" (*wuqing youxing*), being certain that he also felt the theoretical dilemma in Zen Buddhism.

Conclusion

In spite of this less cogent thesis in Zen Buddhism, I still have to affirm positively the shift of Buddha nature from its being solitude to its being self-aware proposed by Zen Buddhism, and it is this revolutionary shift that brought about the equal

¹⁸ Hui Neng, *Platform Scripture of the Sixth Patriarch* (*liuzu tanjing*) (Dunhuang Version), edited and annotated by Guo Peng (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 1983), p. 56.

¹⁹ Hui Neng, *Platform Scripture of the Sixth Patriarch* (*liuzu tanjing*) (Dunhuang Version), edited and annotated by Guo Peng (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 1983), p. 104.

opportunity for ordinary sentient beings to become Buddha. I applaud it as the chief contribution of Zen Buddhism to the sinification of Indian Buddhism. Therefore, we do not see the striking difference between Zen Buddhism and Indian Buddhism in terms of cosmology, but we cannot afford to overlook the difference between them in the methodology concerning individual salvation, that is, to become Buddha. In Indian Buddhism the method to become Buddha is characteristic of gradual cultivation, but in Chinese Zen Buddhism the method to become Buddha is characteristic of sudden enlightenment. This revolution in methodology not only witnessed the dynamic shift of Buddha nature from solitude to self-awareness but also triggered off a self-initiated movement for salvation, reinforced the concept of equality in Chinese clan hierarchy, and encouraged the disseminating the social morality of greater compassion and universal love as fundamental values in traditional religions.

Chapter 8

Human Dignity Reflected in Confucianism and Daoism

Introduction

At the Spring Festival banquet of 2010, one of the most affectionate moments for ordinary Chinese nationals, Chinese premier Wen Jiabao solemnly proclaimed: “What we have done is solely targeted at making a happier and more dignified life for our people.” Such statements like “making a happy life for people” have been frequently made by Chinese leaders at various political events, but they have been fairly occasional in promising that Chinese people should be given a more dignified life. It certainly acquires the extraordinary import when such promise is made at the Spring Festival, full of optimistic expectation for Chinese nationals. Such promise, consequentially, aroused heated discussions among Chinese nationals from all walks of life, generalizing roughly to two categories: one being the material aspect of dignified life in ‘affluence in food and clothing’ as well as ‘living in peace and plenty’, and another being the spiritual aspect of dignified life in ‘free thinking’ as well as ‘independent personality’.

Nevertheless, for Chinese nationals proud of their 5,000-year-old civilization and currently active involvement of economic globalization, ‘dignified life’ or rather ‘human dignity’ means intimate national history and peculiar national reflections, as well as referring to Western experience and its intellectual enlightenment. Regarding their own history, Chinese nationals have been inflicted with the trauma of ‘domestic chaos and foreign invasions’ as well as cheered up with the exhortation of the Golden Times of the Han and Tang Dynasties and the admirable success of the Reform and Open-Door Policy of today. For their peculiar spiritual reflections, Chinese nationals have been immensely benefited by the intellectual enlightenment sourced in ‘one-hundred schools of thought’, in imported yet creatively transformed Buddhism from India, in Marxism, in Western market economy, as well as legitimate or representative democracy. Therefore, the modern Chinese are historically and internationally oriented in their current reflections on human dignity.

Human Dignity Observed in the West

In the Western philosophical domain of human dignity, the sources of two Hs, i.e., Hebrew religion and Hellenic philosophy, are invariably brought into its demonstration, metaphorically alluding to the confrontation between God and Man. Christianity had been the absolute power center before the Renaissance. So the intellectual mission of the fifteenth century was thought to challenge the dignity of Christian styled God to make room for free will of human beings, and an Italian philosopher named Pico Della Mirandola made his Oration on the Dignity of Man, extolled as the Manifesto of Humanism for its emphasis on human rationality and free will. In his logic, if man is believed to be the salt of the earth and the creature of God's image, he is reasonably and divinely entitled to have free access to all the earthly miracles as seen in human beings, the summit and purpose of God's creation. In line with humanistic orientation, Blaise Pascal proclaimed the whole dignity of man in his thinking: "Man is but a reed, the most feeble thing in nature, but he is a thinking reed. The entire universe need not arm itself to crush him. A vapor, a drop of water suffices to kill him. But, if the universe were to crush him, man would still be more noble than that which killed him, because he knows that he dies and the advantage which the universe has over him, the universe knows nothing of this. All our dignity then, consists in thought."¹ In his conviction, man has only occupied negligible space in the universe, but by thinking he might accommodate the whole universe in his mind, reflecting on it as it were only an intellectual article in connection with the motto *House of Mind* for the American Academy's national headquarters. Man's dignity over the universe has thus been realized in his immense faculty of thinking, never matched up by other beings in the universe. This peculiar faculty of human thinking had been thereafter elevated to its utmost by Immanuel Kant, who separated it into two categories, reason for objectively conditioned as representation, perception and conception, and pure reason for subjectively initiated as free-willed critical choice. By his analytical and synthetic sophistication, man's intellectual faculty has been divided into calculation and evaluation, to calculate the objective world with natural law and to evaluate the subjective world with moral law. By distinguishing man with his peculiar faculty of pure reason, man may critically choose objectively conditioned laws while making moral laws for him by intuitional intelligence, and the moral evaluation motivated by man's pure reason has consequently demonstrated human dignity as the sacred right to think. In 'Human dignity' mentioned in Chap. 1 in the German Constitution we cannot afford to neglect its coherence with the constitutional right to think, that is, the sovereignty or state must respect and safeguard man with his dignity. We are also convinced that this article represents the Kantian concept of human dignity in its legal term connoting human free will in the critical evaluation by means of pure reason which had been divinely validating man the

¹ Pascal "*Pensees* 347," in Blaise Pascal, *Pascal's Pensees*, translated by W.F. Trotter, (N.Y.: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd. And E.P. Dutton & Co. Inc., 1958), p. 97.

moment he swallowed fruits from the Tree of Knowledge in the Eden. And what has been revealed and enlightened by these Western thinkers is that, to exist, to think, to evaluate, for man, is to be humanly dignified.

Human Dignity Observed in Chinese Tradition

Now I would like to steer my observation to Chinese tradition. Although it had been infamous for previous Chinese politicians for their predilection for power in negating individual freedom embedded in human dignity, there were still various schools of thought originated in intellectual integrity like Confucians and Daoists sublimating human dignity as sacred moral and thinking rights, expressive of their critical evaluations over secular political powers and materialist benefits, thence constituting the cardinal principles of their ‘this-world philosophy’ and ‘trans-world philosophy’ respectively.

Confucius, Mencius, and Lao-tzu (Lao Zi) and Zhuan-tzu (Zhuang Zi) are popularly worshipped as the initiative thinkers and patriarch scholars for Confucian and Daoist schools. Confucius was consistently proposing ‘Humaneness’ (*rendao*) as the main essentials for human dignity, transcending all sorts of political powers and secular profits. In line with his philosophic reflections on human dignity, such statements are frequented: “the military commander can be captured but the free will of a person will not be contorted”, “The scholar who is determined with Tao (*to distinguish between Confucian Dao and Daoist Dao, I would alter it to be Tao*-from the author) yet being shamed of shabby clothing and humble food is not worthy of being our academic companion”, “Serving the king by Tao or the cosmic righteousness”, “To comprehend the Tao in the morning is to be contented with death in the evening”, “The rich and noble without righteousness seems no value to me just like floating clouds”, “A lofty-minded person prefers to sacrifice his life for maintaining humaneness instead of maintaining life at the cost of humaneness”. His convictions expressed in these statements are that Tao or moral doctrines worshipped by human beings should be cherished absolutely before the attractions or threats of political powers, military coerces, substantial benefits and even human physical lives. Such absolute moral choice deemed by Confucius as ‘being ought’ distinctively indicates what all dignified charm is for being a human being. What Confucius harbored at heart as ‘lofty-minded person’ explains the connotation for human dignity, i.e., moral life being dearer than all categories of secular awards in reputation and rank, and even human physical being. Mencius, following Confucian doctrine and improving it in its epistemological and ethical dimension, managed to vest human dignity with immensity of intelligence and morality of right. To approach the immense capacity of human mind, Mencius has this demonstration: “The faculty of heart is to reflect, to reflect means to apprehend, no comprehension will ever be achieved without reflection by way of heart. Such comprehending faculty is endowed with human being by heaven’s mandates”, “One who works out with his heart completely

apprehends the nature of all things in the universe, in such case he comes to understand what heaven mandates.” To approach the morality of right, Mencius compares it with the arbitrary features of power: “There are two types of titles, i.e., holy heavenly title and secular humanly title. Humaneness, righteousness, loyalty, truthfulness, and enduring tendency towards goodness, these are holy heavenly titles. Persons of different appointed ranks are secular human titles. Our ancient saints were determinate for holy heavenly titles while human titles being unintentionally conferred with. Now we see many persons who are determinate for heavenly titles aiming at human titles, once obtaining human titles, they do not hesitate to abandon their determination for heavenly titles. Those who take titles as instruments for power and wealth are muddle-headed by essence, they will eventually come to no titles at all.” “Heavenly titles”, in Mencius context, are natural rights. And such comprehensive tradition has thus constituted the concept of sacredness of moral rights by Mencius’ moral philosophy, so modern Chinese just translated what natural rights in the West as ‘human rights designated by heaven’ (*tian fu ren quan*) in Chinese context. In Confucian context, specifically in Mencius comparison, heavenly titles fully connote such ethical messages as humaneness, righteousness, loyalty and truthfulness while human titles the messages of secular powers connected with professions and material benefits such as imperial ministers, the nobles and businessmen. The relations between heavenly titles and human titles are that of means and end or instrument and objective, the heavenly titles being the precondition and objective while human titles being bereft of independence and eternity. By this contrast we come to understand that human dignity identifies itself with heavenly titles, despising the suggestion of human titles as aim, and strikingly warning heavenly titles being abused as means to secure human titles. In no circumstances human moral rights designated as ‘righteousness’ should be embezzled as costless means to obtain secular powers and business benefits. Contrary to this ethical or imperative principle, a powerful monarch can degenerate into a ‘solitary public thief’: “Violation of humaneness is identical to a thief, violation of righteousness is identical to a murderer, a monarch of thief and murderer is a solitary guy to public indignation, in this logic, the execution of King Shang Zhou, a public thief and murderer, has nothing to do with assassination.” The conviction Mencius is reiterating here could be that: If a monarch violated the moral rights or human dignity of his subjects he equally committed crimes in encroaching upon their civilian rights, and civilians would be thus far justified in executing their monarch as ‘a solitary public thief’ (*dufu minzei*). This is the most popular case in Mencius insistence on maintaining human dignity by safeguarding human moral rights. We could thereafter be further justified by unexceptional pretext in ‘performing the political mission in Heaven’s stead’ in all social revolutions in Chinese history, their ‘legitimate opposition’ being the very idea of Mencius in his demonstrating human dignity, i.e., human dignity is absolute moral rights against violations from any sources, or otherwise no amnesty should be granted to these violators. Also, we see Xun Zi, a Mencius’ peer Confucian scholar, in his preference of moral rights over monarchal powers by proclaiming “loyalty to Tao instead of Monarch”. Generally speaking, the

genuine Confucian scholars in ancient China would never compromise their insistence on these concepts such as ‘humaneness’, ‘righteousness’, and ‘morally cosmic commitments’ and these concepts are all properly classical expressions of human dignity in Confucian scholars. And their sanctity is both defined as legal rights and moral convictions. With this tradition and convictions we would not be startled in reading such statements in *The Book of Proprieties (lijì)*, featured as the Confucian Classic of Social Norms, as “Confucians are easily convinced by way of being friendly, not to be intimidated; they are easy to be politely persuaded than blatantly coerced; they are willingly to be killed rather to be disgraced.”² These statements are cogently expressive of legal and moral sense designated for human dignity in Confucian tradition.

Narrow-Minded and Lofty-Minded Confucians

Since the most well-known Confucian scholars emphasized human dignity and moral rights, ordinary readers are obviously confused by modern commentaries repulsively intended for Confucianism as “Cannibal Dogma” (*chiren de lijiao*) or “Accomplice to Monarchal Dictatorship” (*junquan zhuanzhi de bangxiang*)? Any disinterested historian or virtually integrated thinker would respond this doubt by referring to the combination between ‘obvious Confucianism and obscure Legalism’ (*yangru yinfa*), and also to the distortion and abuse of Confucian ‘principles of prioritizing humaneness to body and sacrificing life to obtain righteousness.’ (*shashenchenren, sheshenquyi*) by those narrow-minded Confucian scholars and pagans. Regarding those pagans, Yang Xiong, a renowned Confucian scholar in the Han Dynasty, severely criticized: “The doctrine applied by Legalists like Shen Buhai and Han Fei are the stern legalities treating human beings as cows and sheep, completely spoiling humaneness by laboring persons like pure animals!”³ His criticism reveals the Confucian scholars in their consistent reflections on Legalist doctrines of manipulating human beings like other animals, causing moral disgrace to human dignity by negating Confucian principle of humaneness. For narrow-minded Confucians, Confucius himself warned his disciples of adhering to be a lofty-minded Confucian. Zhu Xi, a famous Confucian scholar in the Song Dynasty, had the term of ‘being confined only to reciting words and stereotyped ideas’ to blame those Confucians in the Han and Tang Dynasties for the loss of intellectual’s dignity and the decadent ethos of the empires. But here I would defend the often distorted fame of Dong Zhongshu, the most prestigious Confucian scholar in the Han Dynasty, for his ‘Five Constants’ (*wuchang*) and ‘Three Principles’ (*sangong*). The accurate and unbiased comprehension in his Five

² Rule to Behave, *The Book of Proprieties (lijì, ruxing)* (Changsha: Yuelu Press, 1989), p. 529.

³ Yang Xiong, “Inquiry for Dao, The Doctrinal Analects (*fayan, wendao*),” in *The Complete Works of One Hundred Scholars* (Changsha: Yuelu Press, 1993) Vol. 1, p. 713.

Constants should be moral rights featured as Humaneness, Righteousness, Proprieties, Wisdom, and Truthfulness, which are ethical principles transcending physical space and time, as well as social titles and wealth. But the Three Principles are subordinate to the Five Constants, simply because they are physically confined to social and family contexts. The so-called Three Principles depicted as ‘the subjects should be subject to the emperor, the children should be subject to the fathers, and wives should be subject to the husbands’ are valid only in social and family constraints, being instruments and manageable process for morally guided politics, and their philosophical base and political aim are coherently declared in “the Three Principles of Saint Rule being legitimized by Heaven” and “the Saint Rule being derived from Heaven’s mandate, it would not alter without the Heavens’s moral justification”.

However, if we scrutinize the Confucian doctrines of humaneness and righteousness, or even the Three Principles and Five Constants focused on “the Three Principles of Saint Rule is legitimized by Heaven”⁴ and “The justification of Dao originated in heaven, so if heaven does not alter, neither does Dao.”⁵ In his comprehension, Heaven is the divine authority which endowed human beings their moral rights, being equal to human dignity and justification to check and balance monarch power, demanding monarchs as being obligatory to securing human dignity and moral rights: “Heaven has vested people with moral nature, but such nature would not automatically accomplish in society, therefore Heaven again appointed monarch to help its social translation. The relation between people and their monarch is this: people rely their good nature on heaven’s mandate and its accomplishment on monarch’s governance. What a monarch is justified by Heaven is that he promises to help people in their moral realization.”⁶ In his advocacy of human moral rights, we see human beings with endowed good nature, a sort of natural yet moral rights, and monarch is thus obliged to guarantee that human intrinsic nature transforms fully in social context, uniting the legitimacy of monarch power and general human moral rights with a universal conviction on heaven’s mandate. Such political philosophy can be fairly enunciated if compared with the transfer in the modern West from King’s Power by God’s Covenant to King’s Power by People’s Agreement. We can easily see that such transfer has the logic in religious commitments that human beings are created equally and endowed fairly. Similarly, in the Confucian context, by rectifying the justification of the abused and distorted ‘Three Principles and Five Constants’ we will unavoidably come to the true spirit of Confucianism in upholding human moral rights, seen in Confucius’s “lofty-minded person” and Mencius’s “great husband”

⁴ Dong Zhongshu, “Sophistication on Divine Mission (*ji yi*),” in *Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals* (*chunqiu fanlu*) (Shanghai: Shanghai Classic Press, 1989), p. 74.

⁵ Dong Zhongshu: “Responding to Gifted Appointment, Chapt. 3 (*ju xianliang duice*),” in *A Brief Resources in Chinese History of Philosophy, Part I, from Western and Eastern Han to Sui and Tang Dynasties* (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 1963), p. 18.

⁶ Dong Zhongshu, “Sophistication on Divine Mission (*ji yi*),” in *Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals* (*chunqiu fanlu*) (Shanghai: Shanghai Classic Press, 1989), p. 61.

in “who won’t be seduced to being obscenely rich, who won’t give in because of being poor and plebeian, who won’t reconcile himself to coercion.”⁷ In the Confucian context, a fully realized moral right in a great husband proves to be the identity of human dignity. If explanation other than this is accepted, we will be frustrated in compromising ‘Confucian Humaneness and Mencian Righteousness’ (*kongren mengyi*) with their principles of “prioritizing humaneness to body” and “sacrificing life to obtain righteousness.”

Daoist Dao in Cultivating Humanistic Dignity

As for Chinese Daoist philosophy of “other-world”, they prefer to announce the universal human rights by ‘Abiding by Nature’. Human dignity in their nature-oriented philosophy is expounded in the dimension of cosmically evolved lives, they equally depict such cosmic lives, epistemological fitness, and moral commitments. For human subjective endeavor, cosmic lives do not take any initiative in their production and evolution, but cosmic lives diversify in their abundance naturally, achieving the greatest success expected in the mostly devoted efforts. Thus, natural smartness tells the dialectics of Daoism that “Life abundance realized in nature proves the invalidity of artificial endeavor”, i.e., “action through inaction” in Lao Zi’s philosophy. What had been reiterated as ‘constant Tao’ was believed by Daoists to be the naturally revealing truth, human dignity being integrated with this ‘inactive philosophy’ rather committing oneself to human endeavors in appealing to empirical phenomena of the nature like those physicists. In Daoist doctrine these expounding sentences are frequented as “When Tao can be observed and described it is not constant Tao,”⁸ and “To work on learning is to increase day by day; to work on Tao (the Way, the Truth) is to decrease day by day. When being decreased to its utmost, we come to the Onto, and onto being none-phenomenon explains all phenomena and tells the truth of action through inaction.”⁹ In this narration, Tao or Dao is thought to be the cosmic onto while learning the cosmic phenomena; to work on Tao is metaphysically oriented spirituality while to work on learning is only physically oriented knowledge accumulation. The more efforts are endeavored the more physical knowledge is being accumulated, while the closer to the metaphysical Tao the more physical knowledge should be excluded from its essential conception, and when such logical exclusion comes to pure concept all empirical observations are ontologically explained. The faculty of human intelligence exposed in this epistemological process tells the distinction between human beings from other cosmic beings, and based on this human intellectual dynamics we see his identity with cosmic

⁷ Teng Wen Gong Xia, *The Works of Mencius* (*mengzi, tengwengong xia*).

⁸ Chap. 1 *The Works of Lao Zi*.

⁹ Chap. 48 *The Works of Lao Zi*.

dynamics in abundant vitality, hence alluding human dignity. When we read Pascal in his defining human dignity in taking the whole universe as one of his contemplating objects despite his being tiny a piece of reed in the cosmos, we could be more convincingly appreciative of Lao Zi in his integrating the Tao with diversified cosmic lives: “Tao deprived of its own physical constraints has the fullest play in originating cosmic beings. Being endlessly traced Tao serves as the origin of phenomenal beings, and by negating their observable features, mediating their disputes, harmonizing their competing lights and blending their constituent elements, all cosmic beings are identified as offspring from a Tao family. And in Tao family, Tao would not be offspring of anyone but its only father.”¹⁰ By his ‘negating observable features’ and ‘mediating disputes’, we could cherish the faculty of heart (the function of heart is to think); by ‘harmonizing competing lights’ and ‘blending cosmic elements’, we could endear the importance of lives. By referring to the unity between this intellectual faculty and life evaluation we may acquire the dignity and divinity of the human being in Lao Zi. Comparing with human dignity exposed in the Christian Bible, we are invariably aware that human beings are the creatures, the precondition of this creature is the light, and then the constituent element of soil, their identity with cosmic creation is realized by religious affiliation to their Creator rather than human mind or reflective heart. In the New Testament human beings are assumed as salt for all mankind and like light for the whole world in order to demonstrate God’s grace, obscuring mankind in his creative thinking and independent personality. But in Lao Zi, to work on Tao is to motivate mankind in initiating his own mind in integrating with creative Tao, equalizing human dignity with cosmic onto Tao, and Daoist saints, by working on Tao, are demonstrating their ‘heart-mind’ (*xinsi*) in abiding by natural onto and sanctity, exposing human value in its fullest extent: “A saint has no his selfish heart, but shares a cosmic heart with the rest of human beings. To treat both the kind and the evil fairly is to accomplish in being kind; to treat the truthful and the wicked fairly is to accomplish in being truthful.”¹¹ To accomplish in Tao is to transcend the distinctions in heart, being kind and truthful in the dimensions of individual experience and phenomenal world; this accomplishment is realized in integrating with Tao and also with cosmic eternity in terms of “universal benevolence over individual profits (*dagongwusi*)”, and such realization is only spiritually evidenced by independent thinking and optimistically expected for Daoist saints. In the same tradition of Taoism, Zhuang Zi (*Chuang Tzu*) peculiarly fixed his contemplation on equalizing cosmic beings as the same objects of the human mind and the same offspring of cosmic ancestry, and this cosmic dialectics makes all physical distinctions in the universe intellectually disappear and in such reflections man may finally achieve eternal mental peace. The unity between ‘equalizing cosmic beings’ and ‘achieving eternal mental peace’ tells the human dignity perceived by Zhuang Zi. He is so fascinated in expounding the differences

¹⁰ Chap. 4 *The Works of Lao Zi*.

¹¹ Chap. 49 *The Works of Lao Zi*.

of their own accord that by thus observing man can secure his heart and mind the greatest freedom in being a spiritual companion to the cosmic spirit. A person of such mentality is a true person with Tao, his dignity proving to be identical to light for the world and salt for mankind.

Some Comments

Despite the fact that both Confucian and Daoist scholars have been extraordinarily smart in advocating human dignity in intellectual faculty and value orientation, yet Chinese nationals have been left far behind in their history and social contexts in this regard. As modern Chinese we can never afford to forget that our nation has been tortured by imperial dictatorship for more than 2,000 years, deprecating and spoiling independent thinking and humanistic merits so cherished by their ancient scholars, and smearing human dignity to the false impression that Confucians and Daoists have been serving as ‘accomplices to the feudalist dictators’. Marx once commented that “Monarchy hegemony always applies its policies in ignoring and despising man, turning man into what he should not be.”¹² Such observation and comment applies equally to all dictatorship regimes simply because man has been in this kind of constitution manipulated as a means to maintain imperial powers. No dictatorship both in history and the world has been exceptionally invalid to Marx’s incisive observations. We should also bear in mind what had been claimed by another German thinker Immanuel Kant in “Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of another, always at the same time as an end and never simply as a means.” According to Kantian moral formula, Chinese dictatorship had been depreciating Chinese national ethos, Chinese human dignity and Chinese moral spirit as well, and toward such political institution Lu Xun was sophisticated in censuring the distorted Confucian moral principle as ‘Cannibal Dogma’ and Hu Shi was sarcastic in commenting distorted Daoist True Man as ‘Optimistic Eunuch’ (*daguan de feiwu*), and together with many social ugly phenomena in modern China, human dignity among Chinese has been horribly blemished.

In the 1980s of the twentieth Century, a courageous essayist from Taiwan Island named Bo Yang authored a popular reader *Ugly Chinese* (*choulou de zhongguoren*), immediately causing a cultural state of panic among the Chinese all over the world. His sensitive observations and commentaries led his readers to the knowledge that the dictatorship accompanied by ‘tyrants, despotic officials and mobs’ had been confining Chinese suffering in ‘lying culture’, deprived of human dignity and national integrity. Yet in the beginning of the twenty-first century, he published another book entitled *We Want to Be Dignified*, advocating a dignified

¹² *The Complete Works of Marx and Engels* (Chinese Version) (Beijing: People’s Press, 1956), Vol. 1, p. 441.

life for Chinese on an honest policy, insisting on such basic spiritualities as grace, respect, tolerance, rationality, and truthfulness. I would merit his transforming theme as an essayist to mirror our conscience to live respectfully and gracefully, shunning away from being ugly, cheating, and self-conceited. If we choose to live a dignified life, we would also be grateful for his suggestions for being honest, respectful, tolerant, rational, and truthful. By living with our Confucian and Daoist saints morally and spiritually, we are more likely able to live a dignified life self-conscientiously.

Now the Chinese, exactly like other nations of the world, are being integrated with a trendy globalization; there has been increasing consensus that science and humanities have been social and spiritually indispensable values for Chinese society. Concerns and advice sourced from our saint scholars and western philosophers are all the more intimate to fortify their determination to uphold individually independent thinking, morally committed diplomacy, honestly promised respect for human rights, harmoniously oriented internationalism, and inclusively integrated natural justice. With these convictions harbored at heart, everyone, be it a Chinese or non-Chinese or just any person with human conscience, should be expected to remain more dignified and graceful in defiance of temptation or intimidation from both utilitarianism, capitalism, and totalitarianism.

Chapter 9

A Confucian Perspective on the Enlightenment and Religion

Introduction

The Enlightenment of the modern west is indicative of reason in criticizing the intellectual obscurities inflicted on Europeans by religious dogmatism and political despotism in the ideology of King's power by God's Covenant. Such intellectual movement had not only greatly enlightened human mentality but also positively motivated the French and Americans in their social revolutions. In a due course, people in the west had accomplished a drastically new approach towards religion and religious institutions also had attained their domestic improvement, a triad being more convincing among civilians that philosophy seeks truth, religion goodness and art beauty. Within the domain of reason we have therefore the role of philosophy or science and in a contrastive frame the role of religion has been agreeably limited within the domain of pure reason, being activated by human free will.

The Essential Features of the Enlightenment

The modern western history has witnessed two intellectual movements, i.e., the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, being the spiritual symbols of the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries respectively. For the sixteenth century we associate it with the age of revived literary creation and invigorating secularism and for the eighteenth century the age of intellectual emancipation and social revolutions.

The Enlightenment had its quick spread in Europe due to enthusiastic France in her contributing dozens of brilliant thinkers, making Paris the center for the rest of the European countries where most influential liberal thinkers resided and congregated. Among these intellectual and social figures Voltaire enjoyed high prestige, being labeled as the "Conscience of Europe" and advocating the absoluteness in reason regarding human life and social issues. For Voltaire, Europe was mentally obscured under the control of the Catholic Church and the Monarchy

system was despotic under the control of the Feudalist System, all being mental and political ‘infamies’ for human society. Therefore, he shouted his slogan blatantly: *écrasez l’infame* (erase infamy), stressing the universal role of reason in the Enlightenment. The role of reason has been coherently connected with the mission of the Enlightenment in the series of his works which were obviously acknowledged in all walks of life, Voltaire has thus been credited with the “Embodiment of the Eighteenth Century” and the Enlightenment being “the Age of Reason”.

Apart from the spiritual symbol of Voltaire, the Enlightenment was also joined by many prestigious thinkers in Europe, among them were Montesquieu, Diderot, Rousseau from France, Locke from England, and Lessing and Kant from Germany.

If in the Renaissance of sixteenth century the masters of literature and arts focused their intelligence on human sentimentality and secular life, so in the Enlightenment of eighteenth century rational philosophers attested their reflections on human thinking methodology and social rights, and this parallel naturally leads to what Frederick Engels commented on those Enlightenment thinkers as “The great men who in France prepared the public mind for oncoming revolution stood forth themselves as extreme revolutionists. They recognized no external authority of whatever sort. Religion, theories of nature, society, political institutions, all were submitted to ruthless criticism. Everything was summoned before the judgment-seat of reason, there to justify or, contrariwise, give up its existence. Reason was set up as the only standard. Those were the days when, as Hegel put it, the world was placed upon its head, first, in the sense that man’s head, and maxims, evolved from thought, claimed to be the foundation for all actions and social adjustments, secondly, in the further sense that the reality which stood in contradiction to those maxims was in fact turned upside down. All former social and State institutions, all notions that had come down from ancient days, were pitched into the lumber room as being against reason.”¹ His judgment is expressive of the associative features linking reflective methods with social rights in the Enlightenment, but also reveals the limit of the Enlightenment thinkers, i.e., to evaluate all human merits only from one dimension of reason. It was not until the concept of ‘pure reason’ proposed by Kant, did Europeans begin to distinguish between reason and pure reason, their contrast and association assigning reason with objective necessity and pure reason with subjective free will respectively. The essential clue in this contrast and association could also be succinctly explained by a Confucian anecdote: “When Confucius engages a tedious journey, he never stops to rest at the thief’s well; when he feels thirsty, he never stops to drink from the thief’s well, for he detests the notoriety of the well.”² When being tedious in long journey without evening rest or thirsty without drinking water, man biologically feels hardship and this verifies the objective necessity by virtue of reason. But

¹ Engels, “The Development of Socialism from Utopia to Science,” in *The Selected Works of Marx and Engels* (Beijing: People’s Press, 1995), Vol. 3, p. 687.

² See “The Works of Shi Zi (*sizi*),” in *The Complete Works of One Hundred Scholars (baizi quanshu)* (Changsha: Yuelu Press, 1993), Vol. 2, p. 1612.

when Confucius refuses to rest by the side of the thief's well and to drink from the thief's well he demonstrates his subjectively free-willed choice by virtue of pure reason. While the Enlightenment emphasizes human reason in the disenchantment of religious dogma, yet it may not spontaneously erase human value orientation from its religious tradition, since human beings take initiative in making critical choice by pure reason. Therefore we understand that reason tells the necessity inherited in natural beings via heteronomy while pure reason fortifies the probability in human critical choice via autonomy. The dichotomy in human mentality, its targets and its laws can thus be termed as 'antinomy', i.e., reason and pure reason, objective beings and subjective actions, and heteronomy and autonomy. In this retrospect, we see how this antinomy engaging the Enlightenment and religion, reason and obscurity as conspicuous themes and mental symbols in the eighteenth century. In the wake of this antinomy French and American revolutions, German ideological revolution and English industrial revolution were consequentially inaugurated into the western history, with religion decamping from its intellectual barracks which he had been stationing for a thousand years and occupying the terrace to cultivate social morality, i.e., to limit itself within the boundary of functioning as ethical incubator.

Religion Serving as Negative Example

Regarding the role of religion in the Enlightenment, a jargon in modern Chinese politics may be appropriately borrowed to convey the message in 'serving as negative example'.

By 'serving as negative example', I mean Christianity had been monopolizing human ideology and bolstering institutional authoritarianism since the fifth century in the form of ideological power. Therefore, the Enlightenment must claim its opposition against monarchy in order to liberate the masses of people from its authoritative control, and to rise against monarchy it should hence criticize its supportive ideology, the superstitious obscurity with church as its logo. Thereupon, the Enlightenment finally developed itself into ideological and social movements assuring intellectual and social rights for masses through criticizing religious dogmas and abolishing monarchies. The consecutive intellectual movement attained its perfection in rationalistic ideology while social movement in social revolution aiming at natural rights. In such a movement the intellectual dogma of religion and church, and the political authoritarianism of monarchy became the targets of ideological criticism and social revolutions, with church being taken for granted as negative example.

Committed himself to 'écrasez l'infame', Voltaire termed the pope as 'wild beast on walking legs' and missionaries 'holy scoundrels'. 'L'infâme' meant the church for Voltaire and "God is a circle whose center is everywhere and circumference nowhere." As such faith in God proves to be sheer absurdity, that "If

we believe absurdities we shall commit atrocities.”³ Therefore, he encouraged that everyone should defend himself against the bigotry and superstition inflicted upon by religion by restoring to the power of reason.

Rousseau, Voltaire’s compatriot, managed to steer the mental and moral criticisms of the church toward social institutions, assuming that the church and monarchy had been the grave political misfortunes for the Europeans collaborated by the Catholic ideology. In his analysis, people had been endowed with natural rights and the church and monarchy had been entrusted power by people’s covenant, and if the power entrusted had been abused, people as trusters would have their full rights to rescind their trust, even by way of social revolution overthrowing the power holders, the church, and the monarchy. Rights of people were believed to be naturally sacred, being demonstrable of people’s will in social relations. Being sacred in faith and justified in action, people’s rights were thought as being superior to the power of the church and the monarchy. These two aspects of Rousseau were fully manifested in both the French Revolution and the American Independence Movement, later acquiring the term Popular Sovereignty. In his estimation, since the mental obscurity of the church and the monarchy authoritarianism were expressive of the personal desire of the clergy and the aristocracy in the form of ‘rule of person’, the safeguarding mechanism for people’s rights must be expressive of public will in the form of ‘rule of law’, to drive home the people’s right to free action and to build up rational faith in upholding people’s rights by abiding by the law.

One statement was very popular among the then Europeans in the Enlightenment, made by a young politician William Pitt: “The poorest man may, in his cottage, bid defiance to all the forces of the Crown. It may be frail, its roof may shake; the wind may blow through it; the storm may enter; the rain may enter; but the King of England may not enter; all his forces dares not cross the threshold of the ruined tenement.” And this quotation is easy to remind us of his forerunner Sir Edward Coke in his claim that “Every man’s house is his castle.”⁴ Such statements would be awkwardly evidenced in social communication, for even today we still find it hard to decline peddlers from harassing us at the door, so we cannot imagine how the British Monarch was refused to the entrance into the house of his subjects in the eighteenth century! I, above all, take these statements as the wills to determination and faith in private property. Human dignity and sense of being are not evidenced by actual rights or secular powers, but are subject to reflections upon and faith in human natural rights and their entrusted powers. These rights or entrusted powers were accounted for as the right to think or rational right, being the essential right giving rise to the varieties of other rights. Therefore, the Enlightenment has to prioritize its mission in ridding people of their mental

³ Voltair, “Prejudice,” in *Quotations for Our Time*, ed. Laurence Peter (London: Methuen London Ltd. 1982), p. 419.

⁴ W. Pitt (2011), “On Property,” in *Capitalists Party Policies*, ed. Richard Barrett at <http://www.capitalistparty.ca/index.php/on-property>.

slavery imposed by the church, safeguarding people's sovereignty in reason. Taking a rationalistic stance in the right to think Immanuel Kant, based himself on Cartesian maxim 'Cogito, ergo sum', creatively defined the Enlightenment as "(It) is man's emergence from his self-imposed immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one's understanding without guidance from another. This immaturity is self-imposed when its cause lies not in lack of understanding, but in lack of resolve and courage to use it without guidance from another. *Sapere Aude!* [dare to know]. Have courage to use your own understanding!"⁵ And the last sentence has been popularly accepted as the motto of enlightenment, which reveals the mainstay of the Enlightenment in terms of spirit. I would rather further interpret the reason employed initiatively and freely to be the pure reason. When this pure reason is applied on its own initiative in social practice, it naturally exhibits its universal duty in intuition, bearing 'the merit intuitionally exposed in human conscience' (*liangxin faxian*) convinced in Chinese moral philosophy. Equally encouraged by Kantian motto, I consider the reason opposite to 'pure reason' to be 'the conditional reason', subject to various kinds of objective conditions and abiding by the obligatory law, hence heteronomy, while pure reason, transcending the objectively conditioned limit, motivates a person in critically evaluating and deciding on the objects to intellectual observation, hence autonomy. This intelligent contrast in methodology would be of paramount significance when referring to Chinese aphoristic proverbs: "water flows downward while human aspires upward" and "human risk his life for money while bird for food." These proverbs are popular with the ordinary Chinese in their social activities without being aware that human beings are different from minerals or animals in that they have their independent will as 'the superior animal' or 'the crown of creation', but when compared to Kantian distinction between reason and pure reason, I could tell how these proverbs devalue human beings of autonomy to other natural beings of heteronomy. As human beings, with independent will and motivated by pure reason, are justified in defying all obligatory powers depriving human beings of all their belongings, even lives, since human beings have self-willed determination or observatory evaluation that will not be physically taken away from their minds. This inalienable right is the right to think or to evaluate. Even the person in exploiting his power to abuse the rights of others is, at the same time, demonstrating such right to think, being intentionally motivated by his won thoughts on his actions. Meanwhile, the response and estimation from the victims of abused powers is definitely representative of performing a right to think. Both the French and American Revolutions in the Enlightenment manifested the social implications of 'the sword of Damocles': one may monopoly powers, but he cannot obliterate his intelligent worries about such powers, not being far free from the revolutionary reflections on and its consequential social action against his monopolized powers.

⁵ I. Kant, "What Is Enlightenment," in *Critique of Practical Reason and Foundations of Metaphysics of Morals*, transl. by Lewis White Beck (Beijing: China Social Sciences Publishing House, and Cheng Cheng Books Ltd., 1999), II, viii. p. 35.

So everyone may see clearly that the Enlightenment has committed itself to establishing the right to think as well as the right to take social action in the spirit of rationalism.

Religion Baptized in the Enlightenment

People in the modern west have attained basically a new approach to religion after it being intelligently challenged, socially reformed, and rationally baptized as a result of the Enlightenment, especially with a drastic change in theology more visibly felt than that of the cathedral and clergy systems. When being separate from monopolized power in ideology after the Enlightenment, religion itself has also been sharing a fair right to think established by rationalism, leading theology to deism, theological morality, religious experience and humanistic religion, etc. In consequence, the way western people believe in religion and its role in social life has both altered a great deal.

Most western people adopted the doctrine of philosophical theology before the Enlightenment, i.e., the creation and the universe and the whole world of experience were ordained in the principle of causality. A parallel could tell that if our world of experience is the result of our design, effort and accomplishment, the matchlessly beautiful universe must have its own designer, engineer, and performer. People henceforth believe that God must be the creator, the law-giver, and savior for the universe.

But the astronomy in the sixteenth century and science hypothesis and observatory experience in the seventeenth century advanced new examinations on the positions of the sun, the earth, and other planets in the universe, and the relatively firm conclusions were held that all natural beings in the universe are made of and exist by natural laws instead of God's will. This was the science backcloth when Napoléon asked French scientist Laplace why he had not mentioned God in his work with the latter's definite answer: "Sire, je n'ai pas eu besoin de cette hypothèse" (Sire, I have not need for this hypothesis). In fact, since Spinoza's time deism began to attract western academics in superseding philosophical theology. The Enlightenment thinkers believed that religion should no longer remain the dogma that holy truth had been revealed in the Bible or crucified on the Cross by Jesus Christ Incarnate, but rather one embedded in the natural laws subject to human reason. Laws regulating natural beings can be attesting human intelligence instead of God's existence, and such mental shift of human exploration resulted in banishing religion from 'the domain of reason'. However, people would naturally transcend the obligatory limits of reason when expressing their sentiments, making moral judgment and taking initiative in private issues. These actions taken and arrangements made by human subjective determination have all the clues that they used to designate God, his free will and autonomy in creation, legislation, and salvation. But differing himself from God, man expresses his free will and takes initiative in the sphere of 'pure reason', being indicative of the obligatory sphere of conditional reason. In other words,

the Enlightenment thinkers still reserved a room for God and religious sentiment while driving them out from the domain of reason, limiting the conceptual God derived from human religious experience within the sphere of pure reason.

In his analytic and synthetic interpretation, Kant peculiarly divided 'rationalism' into theoretical reason and pure reason in practice in constructing his critical philosophy. Of course, reason as a theme had been discussed enormously since Descartes, with doubt left unascertained for Kant: why rationalism so ardently advocated and applied had not alienated people from their spiritual life? Would it be possible that religion holds a position in human spirituality unshakeable by reason? As a natural being, could man be socially moral besides being logical in speculation and reflective in observation? If the animal quality of man can be demonstrated by theoretical reason, his social morality can also be confirmed by pure reason. Therefore, in Kantian philosophic system he reversed the traditional way of worshipping God much the same as did in Copernican revolution: it is not God who created human beings in his image of freedom, equality, and fraternity but man who needs a God in justifying his moral convictions, this justification being identical to the transcending quality of God with pure reason. In this ideological frame God is designated with unempirical nature impenetrable by theoretical reason, so his existence, though being unknowable, is merely postulated for the sake of human moral practice. As a humanist philosopher, Kant had been firmly affiliated to *summum bonum*, or supreme good, as teleological criteria guiding human beings in their social relations; thus, being motivated by pure reason, human beings become engaged with practice, turning pure reason into practical reason with God as the last spiritual resort of freedom, immortality, and creator. In his critical philosophy, the argument of God's existence had been shifted from ontology to ethics; the authority of religion had been established on anthropology instead of dogma. In this shift and establishment, we no longer stick to the rational argument of God's existence and his henceforth creation, but favor a hypothesis that our moral practice being buttressed by intrinsically human pure reason, being morally distinctive of wild animals governed by the law of the jungle.

Opposite to 'might makes right', we see in Kant 'Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become universal law',⁶ and this is the prerequisite of being a moral human to whom duty becomes obligatory and universal. In short, man, by nature has the duty to be moral, legislating a universal law for him as well as for his fellow beings, with the categorical imperative decreed as if by a universal lord-God. As Kant himself stated clearly: "I have therefore found it necessary to deny knowledge, in order to make room for faith."⁷ For him knowledge is what theoretical reason might work out with empirical objects, faith is what pure reason might take initiative in

⁶ Immanuel Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, translated and with an introduction by Lewis White Beck (the Macmillan Publishing Company, 1959), p. 39.

⁷ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1956), p. 29.

practice. That is probably why modern theologian Karl Barth believes that in Kant, especially in his *Critique of Pure Reason* that the eighteenth century has discovered, understood, and acknowledged itself. I would thereby conclude that in the eighteenth century the Enlightenment succeeded in both denying religious dogma as universal truth and confining religion in human morality cultivation.

Since the eighteenth century has been identical to ‘the age of reason’, its academic mission is naturally aligned with human intelligence in religious disenchantment. But by Kantian summery, it does not focus merely on abolishing religion, but delineates the confinement of religion within the limit of pure reason intrinsically activating human in his practice guided by universal moral law. Complementary to theoretical reason in observing empirical objects, pure reason helps man in his social practice to build up morality, hence constituting human civilization harmoniously. If not approached in such a balanced way to the Enlightenment one can become perplexed at the free choice for individual faith and legislated religious tolerance in social life in the modern west. These are the major aspects of spiritual legacies left by the Enlightenment accompanied by the decline of traditional religious dogma and monarchy despotism.

Now I beg to develop some reflections on Chinese philosophy in line with the Enlightenment in the west. About six centuries earlier to Kant, Chinese Confucian philosopher Zhu Xi defined human dignity for his rational competence in observing and speculating all natural beings including human beings in the world, to a conclusion that the immeasurable value of being human lies just in his rational competence, which may explore into cosmic particle to attain its theoretically absolute truth. Zhu Xi and his peer Confucian scholars contributed their utmost to ‘how human beings could exploit their reasons in their external empirical world’, but they did not distinguish themselves in ‘why human beings should exploit their rational potentialities to their fullest extent?’ It was not until the sixteenth century that another Confucian philosopher, Wang Yangming, began to criticize this rationalist bigotry of Confucian style by committing himself ‘to attain moral knowledge in distinguishing good from evil’ (*zhishan zhi e shi liangzhi*) and ‘to stick to good in avoiding evil is to apply moral knowledge’ (*weishan qu e shi gewu*). To his estimation, the Confucian rationalists were myopic in attaining knowledge only. What he believed in human is his dignity exhibited in ‘moral conscience and moral quality’, insisting on the change from attaining knowledge to attaining moral knowledge, and for moral knowledge a pioneer Confucian thinker Mencius interpreted it this way: “the faculty to perform without being taught is intrinsically performing ability; the faculty to know without contemplating is intrinsically moral knowledge. Children in their very young all know to love their relatives, when grown up all know to respect their elder brothers. To love one’s relative is the manifestation of humaneness; to respect the elder is the manifestation of righteousness. So humaneness and righteousness are universal principles under the heaven.”⁸ I would assume the comparison between Mencius

⁸ Jin Xin Shang., *The Works of Mencius* (*Mengzi, jinxin shang*).

and Kant in their ‘intrinsically performing ability and moral knowledge’ as well as ‘pure reason’ respectively to the acknowledgment that the true nature and social role of religion in human society should be convincingly interpreted the way they both did. Their observation and speculation on religion or faith in human intuitional kindness could be equally sourced in assisting our query why religion has been improving in a secular and humanistic direction after the Enlightenment.

Conclusion

Sima Qian, the father of Chinese historiography in the Han Dynasty about 2000 years ago once explained Chinese religious experience in ‘Worshipping Heaven and Ancestor’ as “Heaven is the beginning of Man, while father and mother are the source of human life. Emotionally, when man is thrown at the end of his power and wit he will invariably trace back to his beginning and source for psychological comfort. So we intuitively shout out for Heaven when we are struck out of a sudden, we cry out for parent when we are hurt physically to the extreme.”⁹ This is the exact intellectual and spiritual context that Chinese scholars base themselves in translating Catholic into ‘the Religion of a Heavenly Master’, insinuating the sense of morality and humanity exposed in western religion after the Enlightenment. By introducing Sima Qian’s observation and commentary I mean we can be benefited in assessing Kant in his interpreting the essence and role of religion challenged by the Enlightenment thinkers, and also it could be conducive to appreciating what Schleiermacher described religious experience as “immediate self-consciousness in which the self feels itself totally dependent on something infinitely beyond itself—something that the Christian calls God.”¹⁰ By contemplating rationalism in the Enlightenment from the intellectual sources of both western and Chinese thinkers, I would rather consider it agreeable that religion should be safely guarded within the limit of pure reason or the scope of intrinsically moral knowledge (*liangzhi*), functioning as ‘morality incubator’ in the west and ‘justifying oneself by heavenly mandate’ (*anshenliming*) in Chinese spirituality. The merit of religion in social morality cultivation prudently appreciated in the modern world definitely owes its gratitude to the Enlightenment for its mental disenchantment against religious dogmatism and its political revolution against monarchy despotism.

⁹ Sima Qian, “Biographies of Qu Yuan and Jia Yi, Historical Records (*shiji, quyuan jiasheng liezhuan*),” in *The Twenty-Four Histories* (Version of Simplified Chinese Characters) (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 2000), Vol. 84, p. 1933.

¹⁰ *Enduring Issues in Religion*, edit. by John Lyden (Greenhaven Press, Inc, 1995), p. 19.

Part II
Outer King: Some Aspects
of Chinese Philosophy

Chapter 10

The Spirit of Chinese Philosophy

Introduction

In the spectrum of Chinese intellectual tradition, philosophy has been integrated as a unity among cosmology, epistemology, and value orientation. Such unity, termed as “the integration between heaven and human” (*tianren heyi*) of Chinese genre, reveals the feature of evolution in its cosmology as opposed to creation in the west, the intuitional feature combining objective knowledge and subjective experience in its epistemology instead of stark objective knowledge of the west, and universal incarnation for each individual as sage in its value orientation other than exclusive holy reincarnated Being in Christian tradition. The methodology in Chinese universal incarnation as individual secular sage is to initiate self-cultivation through “picking up one’s cosmic dynamics” or “cultivating one’s cosmic air” (*yang haoranzhiqi*) from within each individual self instead of waiting passively for the external holy salvation at doomsday. Therefore, the spirit of Chinese philosophy is concisely expressed in the harmonious relations among man and nature, person and person, and soul and body.

In the twentieth century, I would rather assume Feng Youlan and Shenchi Li as the inspiring and instructive leading protagonists in interpreting the spirit of Chinese philosophy, Feng addressing the issue in the first chapter of his *The Short History of Chinese Philosophy* and Li in his paper printed in the Vol. 7, 1993, Xinhua Digest.¹ For this reason, I would rather assume that the very theme in our current context is sure to be illuminated in line with their intellectual exploration, but with some updated and suggestive approaches.

The term ‘philosophy’ would seem awkward when applied to explaining the domain of Chinese spirituality, since “the pursuit of sainthood” (*chengsheng chengxian*) distinguishes Chinese tradition drastically from that of Greek in the latter’s “the love of wisdom”. For this distinction, there have been two terms of

¹ For Feng’s *Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, it has been printed by several presses in the west since it was first printed in English by Macmillan Company, in 1948, serving as the most influential introductory work in understanding Chinese philosophy.

logical subtlety in “Chinese Philosophy” as well as “philosophy in China”. For “philosophy in China”, the term connotes the universality of philosophy, i.e., the love of wisdom, and as for “Chinese Philosophy”, it conveys the message of particularity of philosophy. In case of Chinese philosophy, such particularity could be indigenously addressed as “the scholarship of heaven’s mandate”(*tian-mingzhixue*), i.e., the cosmological ethics expressed in the well-known motto: “Scholars are expected to become sages, sages to become saints, saints to integrate themselves with heaven.”² Hence, the spirit of Chinese philosophy is identical that of particularity in the universal scope of philosophy. In the twentieth century, both Feng Youlan (also spelt as Fung Yu-lan) and Jin Yuelin were acknowledged as Chinese philosophers of world prestige and what they addressed as philosophy is definitely “Chinese Philosophy” instead of “philosophy in China”, which integrates cosmology, epistemology, and value orientation as a unified spiritual body instead of specific disciplines.

The Bow Lost in the Universe

Feng Youlan was good at clarifying metaphysics in popular Chinese stories, illuminating the identity of metaphysics with the spirit of Chinese philosophy, and the much cited one in his academic narrations is “The Bow Lost in the Universe” (*gong shi yuzhou*). The story goes that Duke Chu went hunting with his men, but the secretary in charge of keeping the bow and arrows ready for the Duke happened to lose the bow somewhere. Usually hot tempered, Duke Chu was unexpectedly considerate of the secretary, who might have been beheaded in its administrative austerity as serious dereliction of duty, giving the directive: “Forget it! If it were lost within the territory of Dukedom of Chu, I do not accept it as being lost. My people might pick it somehow for his hunting. So there is no reason to punish the guy or to retrieve it.” This anecdote was soon circulated among the dukedoms in China as “No retrieval is necessary since the bow is lost in our own Dukedom Chu.” On hearing the story, Confucius improved it by the statement: “If the bow were lost in China, we should equally consider it a proper place for it to go. So nothing is really lost in the territory of China.” In the later statement, we can tell that Confucius had been superior to Duke Chu in his interpreting the allegory of the lost bow. But then, Confucius was mocked at by Lao Zi (otherwise pronounced as *Lao Tzu*) for his narrow minded concept of ‘China’, which should be opened for the ‘world’, i.e., that a lofty-minded person should forget the distinction between his dukedoms, and by overstepping the boundaries of

² This motto has been extremely popular among Confucian scholars since it was stated in *Volition, Universal Scholarship* (*tong shu, zhi xue*) by Zhou Dunyi, a Confucian master scholar in the Song Dynasty.

dukedom in China he may dearly experience what a natural world implies ontologically, thus leading to the natural philosophy of Daoism or Taoism.³

But according to Feng Youlan, even Lao Zi still leaves much to be desired for his metaphysical implication, since the natural world is substantially physical with high mountains, flowing waters, blue sky, and white clouds. For a philosopher with a pure concept of the universe, he must rid himself of even a drop of dust in the universe, and in such a logical sophistication Feng confirms that a philosophical universe must be one of logically metaphysical, transcending persons, dukedom, China, the world, and even the universe of space science or astrophysics, as they are all confined within the objective world manipulated by physical laws, inferior to the subjective world of human free will in the capacity to examine the universe as the object of human mind and to invest it with moral sense. Despite their being different in scope and degree, what Duke Chu, Confucius, and Lao Zi were arguing were still in the category of the physical world, their ‘sphere of living’ (*jingjie*), for which I prefer to its substitute ‘mentality’ that cannot be matched with the ‘transcendent sphere’ (*tiandi jingjie*, its essence being identical to ‘cosmos mentality’), the zenith of Feng’s Theory of Spheres of Living (*jingjielun*, or literally ‘The Theory of Mentality’). Approached from Chinese philosophy, the ‘cosmos’ where cosmology, epistemology, and value orientation could reciprocally and harmoniously sustain must be logical one, establishing the common good free from any social and intellectual experiences of any human being in any human context except human mentality itself. This ‘logical cosmos’, by which Feng’s ‘Theory of Mentality’ is justified, has been identical to the Buddhist ‘Nature-Emptiness-in-Cosmological-Interdependence’ (*yuanqi xingkong*) by way of ‘cleaning verbal garbage when uttered as words’ (*suishuo suisao*) and the ‘Aristotelian reflective thinking’. Such philosophic concept of ‘cosmos’ for constructing the metaphysical context in which philosophers may deduce their reflections on the ultimate sense of human life naturally lead us to the ladder image exhibited at the end of Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, who stated that

“My propositions are elucidatory in this way: he who understands me finally recognizes them as senseless, when he has climbed out through them, on them, over them (He must so to speak throw away the ladder, after he has climbed up on it).”

“He must surmount these propositions; then he sees the world rightly.”

³ “The Bow Lost in the Universe” is deduced from a popular story in Common Good, *The Spring and Autumn of Duke Lü* (*lüshi chunqiu, gui gong*) which tells: “When a guy from Dukedom Chu refused to retrieve his lost bow, he explained that a bow lost by one Chu guy would eventually be picked up by another Chu guy and such an inevitable situation would make my retrieval senseless. When hearing about this allegory, Confucius commented that it would be nicer if he forgets his dukedom. And again when Lao Zi hearing about Confucius’s commentary, he simply suggested that he should forget human being. Therefore, Lao Zi’s remark really comes to the essence of supreme good”.

“Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent.”⁴

He means that the purpose of philosophy is to reveal the sense of metaphysics through verbal explanations, something like climbing to the height, whose metaphysical sense can only be attained by transcending its physical position measured by a climbing instrument, i.e., the ladder, or otherwise any high position can be calculated by the height of a ladder, failing the sense of metaphysical height ‘as high as high can be’, which could be attained in throwing away the ladder. Similarly, if we accept the Kantian definition of metaphysics as ‘the queen of sciences’, we must free our mentality from any physical observation and verbal interpretation on the natural world including our biological mind and its faculty. Combining Aristotelian ‘reflective thinking’ and Wittgenstein’s ‘verbal silence’, Feng contributed his philosophical interpretations of Chinese genre to the distinction between ‘positive knowledge’ and ‘mentality’, with ‘positive knowledge’ with which we observe and describe the empirical world and with ‘mentality’ with which we conceptually appreciate the beauty of metaphysics by ‘reflective thinking’ and ‘throwing away ladder’. With a different image of ‘cutting finger’ in an illuminated case of the Chan Stories or Zen Stoires (*gong an*), Feng arrived at the same statement of ‘verbal silence’:

“A Chan story describes how a certain teacher used to stick out his thumb when he was asked to explain the Buddhist Dao (*Tao*). On such occasions, he would simply remain silent, but would display his thumb. Noticing this, his boy attendant began to imitate him. One day the teacher saw him in this act, and quick as lightning chopped off the boy’s thumb. The boy ran away crying. The teacher called him to come back, and just as the boy turned his head, the teacher again stuck out his own thumb. Thereupon the boy received Sudden Enlightenment.”

“Whether this story is true or not, it suggests the truth that before the negative method is used, the philosopher or student of philosophy must pass through the positive method, and before the simplicity of philosophy is reached, he must pass through its complexity.”

“One must speak very much before one keeps silent.”⁵

In the anthology of Buddhist stories entitled *Pointing to Moon by Finger* (*zhiyuelu*), the metaphysical sense is frequently alluded in this way: The Moon in the sky may be seen by a pointing finger, but that moon is not the Moon in its reality. If one should be free from the physical confinement of the instrumental finger, he is optimistic to get the sense of a real moon on the condition of forgetting the pointing finger, which serves only as ‘a means to an end’ (*fangbian famen*) and in consequence, the Moon can testify as the sole aim of man’s mental pursuit. Therefore, in both western and Chinese traditions, the physical cosmology always

⁴ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, tans. C.K. Ogden, (Beijing: China Social Sciences Publishing House, and Cheng Cheng Books Ltd., 1999), p. 189.

⁵ Feng Youlan, “A Short History of Chinese Philosophy,” in *Selected Philosophical Writings of Feng Youlan* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1991), p. 567.

serves as a means to achieve the metaphysical aim in value orientation which both Wittgenstein and Feng Youlan believed exist in a world of silence above the verbally described empirical world.

Since Feng Youlan is a scholar of versatility in both the western and Chinese traditions, I would suggest readers to associate the beginning sentences to last ones in his *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, which states: “The place which philosophy has occupied in Chinese civilization has been comparable to that of religion in other civilizations.”⁶ Compared with his last sentence in the same book: “One must speak very much before one keeps silent”, we know that religion in other civilizations aims at moral cultivation or religion seeking after good while Chinese philosophy is intended to cultivate a person into sainthood. With different terms of religion and philosophy in different civilizations, the moral objectives for human social life do bring these civilizations in the same spiritual track that has been sustaining western nations through the ages with their religions and the Chinese with their moral philosophy or simply Rite Religion (*lijiao*). In both philosophy and religion in the west, the physical world is to metaphysical truth what the verbally described world is to the Holy Word of the Creator, transcending human words, leaving the moral sense of the Creator worshipped by its religious adherents in sacred silence. Much the same is in Chinese tradition, either ascribed as moral philosophy or Rite Religion, the most devotedly worshipped by Confucius as the Heavenly Mandate (*tianming*) is to all natural beings what “speechless Dao” is to “the four seasons move orderly and natural beings exist harmoniously.” (*tian heyuan zai, sishi xing yan, baiwu sheng yan*), leaving value orientation silently implied in empirical cosmology. If the western religion intends to convert an empirical cosmos into a moral paradise and its philosophy into a reflective thinking system, then Chinese philosophy just proposes to convert a cosmological world into a big family of common good.

Justifying One’s Life by Heavenly Mandate

Regarding the spirit of Chinese philosophy, there has been a consensus among influential modern scholars like Cai Yuanpei (the president of Beijing University in the years of the May 4th Movement), Jin Yuelin, Feng Youlan, and Li Shenzhi, who are widely recognized as the last important liberalist thinkers in China of the twentieth Century, this consensus being epitomized as ‘Justifying Oneself by Heavenly Mandate’ (*anshen liming*), which discloses the unity of cosmology, epistemology, and value orientation of Chinese genre.

Being distinguished from other pure scholars or philosophers, Li Shenzhi, first of all, is a Chinese communist, though being twice disgraced as ‘alienated dissident’. He harbored at heart a similar judgment about the spirit of Chinese

⁶ Ibid, p. 193.

philosophy and was intimately experiencing it in his life full of political frustrations. An offspring of independent and courageous prime minister Li Gang of the Song Dynasty, Li Shenzhi was recruited as a elite student in Yan Jing University, a well-known Christian university before 1949. He chose Economics as his undergraduate major, in line with Marx's interest exhibited in his *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, and during his campus life he was enlisted as a Chinese Communist the in Chinese Nationalist Party (*guomindang*). After the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Li was nominated the initiative chief editor of *The Uncommunicative References* (*neican*). As chief editor and international news media digester, Li noticed that Marxism, worshipped so devoutly in his young age, was suspected or even massively protested against in Eastern European countries. People in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Poland had not been happy with Communist dogmatism, in some radical cases social riots and rebellions were sparked off. When the Events of Poland and Hungary were translated and carried on *The Uncommunicative References*, Mao Zedong, more popularly called Chairman Mao, sent his secretary Lin Ke to the International Department, Xin Hua News Agency, to consult Wang Fei and Li Shenzhi, the director and deputy director of the department, about the possible impact of anti-communist events in eastern Europe on Communist China. Wang and Li obviously assigned the social riots and massive protest to the lack of constitutional democracy after the downfall of Hitler in Eastern Europe, and Li eventually suggested: "Chairman Mao should prepare a five-year-plan to return Government to people besides the five-year-plan for economic construction," "We Communists should also encourage media freedom, courses on civilian rights and constitution should also be conducted in the elementary and middle schools, helping every citizen in New China be aware his or her right and duty" and "we communists should introduce grand democracy: to establish constitutional court and to carry out social and political reform after the social revolution in China." These opinions and suggestions were later severely criticized by Chairman Mao in one of his political directives:

"We have some intellectual cadres at bureau leadership eventually advocating grand democracy instead of meager democracy. What their 'grand democracy' means is nothing new than the Congress system in the west, their 'representative democracy', 'press freedom' and 'freedom of opinions'. These advocacies are fallacies bereft of Marxism and class analysis."⁷

With this alluded criticism of Chairman Mao, Li was, accordingly, labeled 'rightist', a sort of counter-revolutionary equal to an enemy in the war time China. Some people also joked about his 'being royally designated' (*qindian*) as rightist, i.e., he was destined to be rightist since the supreme Communist leader insidiously targeted him at the beginning of the Campaign against Rightist. This was the context when Li survived while such a severe challenge based on world view

⁷ Mao Zedong, *The Selected Writings of Mao Zedong* (Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1977), Vol. 5, p. 323.

and value orientation in a situation many rightists like him committed suicide or were simply driven to spiritual collapse.

Since many of these miserable examples were targeted by their leaders at lower administrative levels, people had full reason to expect Li to take even worse action against his life because he was the only rightist suggested by Chairman Mao at the highest administrative level. With this catastrophic dilemma, Li wrote a remorseful phrases as his last will and testament:

“By self-assured smartness, I just invited my own destruction; by self-assured enthusiasm, I just invited my own humiliation.”

These phrases were prepared as the last words to reveal his political and life tragedy when he was ready to end his life. Strangely enough, a whim attracted him to read about ‘reactionary idealist philosophy’, namely the ‘Neo-Rationalist Theory’ (*xin lixue*) by Feng Youlan. A very casual reading of some lines in Feng’s book helped dismiss him from his self-destruction plan. In the Neo-Rationalist Theory, Feng explained his life philosophy: We human beings are basically foolish in that we are only addicted to our positions in society to the negligence of our positions in the universe. Li, explained his mental shock caused by these lines to me in person, and said: “When reading these lines, I was completely emancipated, free from any spiritual burdens.” His logic is thus: In a universal frame, Chairman Mao accused me of being rightist which proves his muddle-headedness. If he comes to his sobriety in the future, my suicide might equally prove fruitlessly absurd. Is it possible that the Chinese Communist Part is now misguided, but may rectify its anti-rightist policy in the future? If all Chinese nationals took rightists as reactionaries, who could assure the judgment on rightists made by the people of the rest of the world? If human beings are antagonistic towards rightist, can it be certain that all natural beings like stones and trees in the universe feel the same? In the universe, the distinction between rightist and leftist does not substantially exist among natural beings. At a cosmos level, human beings are kinds of stones and trees which know no boundary between right and left. Logically speaking, all beings including natural substances and mental concepts are just value-free beings. The holy justification is its existence, and not its ideological or material dimensions. Such a world view in Feng’s Neo-Rationalist Theory did enlighten Li in his political and ethical perplexity. Of course Feng based himself on Chinese philosophy in terming it as ‘cosmos mentality’ (*tiandi jingjie*) or in Feng’s term ‘the transcendent sphere’. Of course the entry ‘mentality’ is introduced from Indian Buddhism into China, which associates with both cosmology and epistemology. In Buddhist philosophy, cosmos consists basically of the ‘four grand elements’: earth, water, fire, and wind. Yet, assessed in the ontological epistemology ‘*prajñā*’, these intellectual confirmation as material substance can be deconstructed as ‘false phenomena or illusions’, therefore, all materially substantial beings are in the final analysis ‘emptiness’, connoting their lack of independent identity. According to the Buddhist Dependent Origination, the basic cosmos elements are demonstrated as ‘The Four Cosmos Elements Are Empty by Onto’ (*sidajiekong*), i.e., in the transcendence all substantial phenomena must be

negated. In such a reference, people might not be enchanted by a false mundane world and be anticipated to achieve ‘enlightenment’ (*juewu*). This is the value orientation resulting in an integrated cosmology and epistemology. Fully aware of “a position in the universe”, Li Shenzhi was no longer annoyed by ‘cadre at bureau leadership’ and ‘rightist’.

After being labeled as ‘rightist’, Li Shenzhi gave himself a name-‘Heavenly Title Li’ (*Li Tianjue*), a penname he employed in his translation of *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany*. What does ‘Heavenly Title’ imply? It definitely implies the unity between world view and life philosophy. ‘Heavenly Title’ is the term first employed by Mencius in his comparison with ‘Human Title’:

“There are two types of titles, i.e., holy heavenly title and secular humanely title. Humaneness, cosmic dynamics, loyalty, truthfulness, and enduring tendency towards goodness, these are holy heavenly titles. Persons of different appointed ranks are secular human titles. Our ancient saints were determinate for holy heavenly titles while human titles being unintentionally conferred with. Now we see many guys who are determinate for heavenly titles aiming at human titles, once obtaining human titles, they do not hesitate to abandon their determination for heavenly titles. Those who take title as instruments for power and wealth are muddy headed by essence, they will eventually come to no titles at all.”⁸

His illumination shows the clear restrictions of ‘Human Title’, subject to the outlandish ideas of monarchs or kings in their imperial or royal appointments. But the persons of integrity, or those ‘Being Indomitable in the Cosmos’ (*dingtian lidi*) initiatively enjoy ‘Heavenly Titles’ of their own moral conscience, i.e., their titles are not subject to the disposals of kings or monarchs. Braving social difficulties and political persecution, Li Shenzhi made up his mind to become a Confucian ‘Heavenly Title’ holder. Epistemologically, Mencius originated his ‘Heavenly Title’ in the hypothesis ‘heart’, the moral organ which functions as an intellectual instrument to know and also as an intuitional soul to be universally compassionate. The specialty of the ‘heart’, more than a biological blood-pump, is elucidated thus by Mencius:

“One who works out with his heart completely apprehends the nature of all things in the universe, in such case he comes to understand what heaven mandates. So human being is anticipated to fulfill his heart function to think affectionately and harmonize his heart with universal natures for the vocations destined by heaven mandate. Such a holy determination will not alter despite being shorter or longer life expectancy, and this is what heavenly mandate is being performed by man.”⁹

To justify oneself as holding ‘Heavenly Title’, one may align his heart with human nature, the nature of all beings, and the heavenly mandate, thus being liberated from the spiritual addictions to social positions or ‘human titles’. If

⁸ Gao Zi Shang, *The Works of Mencius* (*mengzi, gaozi shang*).

⁹ Jin Xin Shang, *The Works of Mencius* (*mengzi, jinxin shang*).

approached from the statement “all beings in the universe have their independent nature”, the social positions and secular attainments may no longer remain permanently attractive as they used to be, since “the greatest undertaking by Saint Kings Yao and Shun is nothing more than a speck of dust in the universe (quotes from Cheng Hao, Confucian scholar in the Song Dynasty)”. Both Yao and Shun are Saint Kings, matchlessly high in power and morality. Yet, if they were stationed in the universe, their magnificence would be immediately minimized to nothing more than a tiny particle. What is even more dignified in the universe, as Mencius believes, is the ‘Heavenly Title’, which endows ordinary people as ‘Heavenly People’ (*tianmin*) while the most powerful kings or monarchs are comparatively designated as ‘Sons of Heaven’. ‘Heavenly People’, cosmologically evaluated, are superior to ‘Sons of Heaven’, explained by Mencius as:

“People is the most valuable in the world, country comes second, and monarch the last. Therefore it is the people that make monarch his throne, it is the monarch that makes dukes their ranks, and it is the duke that makes his ministers their positions.”¹⁰

Without people or ‘Heavenly People’, monarch or ‘Son of Heaven’ is nobody but ‘a solitary public thief (*dufu minzei*)’. Generally speaking, Chinese emperors or powerful guys are not happy with Confucian scholars who have been committed to being ‘Saint Teachers to Emperors’ (*xianzhe wei diwangshi*) and ‘Saint Scholars Not To Be Summoned’ (*bu zhao zhi chen*). Mencius further explained that

“There are three universal honors in the world: the titles, the aged, and the virtue. In the imperial court the titles or high positions are most cherished; in the community the aged or veteran, and in assisting kings or monarchs and governing the masses the virtue or moral persons. In these parallels, the title in the court is not justified to neglect the other two honors. So the king committed to great undertakings must have persons of age and virtue not to be summoned, if he wants their advices, he must behave himself as a visiting pupil to them. If he does not show his respect for saint scholars in all sincerity, it does not merit any service to him. Therefore Saint King Tang Shang first behaved himself a sincere pupil to Saint Scholar Yi Yin before winning his service and being benefiting in consolidating his rule. Duke Qi Huan managed himself to be pupil to Saint Scholar Guan Zhong in securing his dukedom as the hegemony in the Spring and Autumn Period. Nowadays all dukedoms remain similar in their respective territory and virtue as the result of kings’ behaving as teachers to their servants instead respecting them as saint teachers. In the case that Saint King Tang Shang did not dare to summon Saint Scholar Yi Yin and Duke Qi Huan to Guan Zhong, I am more proud of my being superior to Guan Zhong.”¹¹

In Mencius, ordinary people with social positions are bestowed with the sacred capacity of virtue and its consequential political powers. That is why all Chinese farmers’ rebellions have been justified in ‘performing the political mission in

¹⁰ Jin Xin Xia, *The Works of Mencius* (*mengzi, jinxin xia*).

¹¹ Gongsun Chou Xia, *The Works of Mencius* (*mengzi, gongsunchou xia*).

Heaven's stead' (*titianxingdao*), since they believe that all persons have their moral as well as epistemological hearts, speculating and feeling the true nature of universal beings sanctified by heavenly mandates. This is what the term 'Heavenly Title' (*tianjue*) meant to Li Shenchi, a philosophical way and conviction sustaining him in all possible human, social, or political catastrophes.

Integration Between Heaven and Human

Only in contrast to the Christian culture and Greek philosophy of the West, may we gain a clearer vision of Chinese philosophy. What the Chinese holds most important is the human in his quality, and not his specific capacity. Like a natural being, every human being is expected to integrate himself with all other beings in the scope of universal nature, harmonizing them into a sustainable unity, revealing natural justice stated in Confucian classic as "cosmological harmony" (*zhonghe*):

"Therefore, cosmological entity is *the grand norm (daben)* in the world under the heaven; and cosmological harmony is *the perfect evolution. (dadao)*. In the unity between cosmological entity and harmony heaven and earth are distinguished with their respective faculties, which hatch out and nurse up every physical being."¹²

'The Grand Norm' and 'the Perfect Evolution' are the divine doctrines introduced to worship 'heavenly mandate', deduced from the incipient sentences in *The Doctrine of the Mean*: "The universal nature has been destined by heaven's mandate, to attest this universal nature is to apply Dao or cosmological dynamics, to inculcate Dao is to carry out education." Distinguished from the conviction in the western Christian tradition, these Chinese divine doctrines are embedded in the process of cosmological evolution instead of ontological creation by God. In *The Book of Poetry (shijing)*, another Confucian classic, we read these lines "All beings are born in the evolution guided by heaven's mandates, being manipulated by natural laws,"¹³ which suggests that human beings or any natural beings are the results of heaven's mandates, out of his moral kindness. In contrast to God's 'free will' in his creation, heaven's mandates are not objectively absolute, but their moral and cosmological senses are fully acknowledged and evidenced in human understanding and undertakings by each human being in his heart partaking in the moral, cosmological, and epistemological functions. Therefore, in the Chinese Integration between Heaven and Human, cosmological laws and human moral laws are conscientiously expressive in each individual human in his social life, and any person, in this faith of 'Heaven's Mandates', should be termed either as 'Heavenly Title' or 'Person of Cosmic Heart' (*liangmin*), constituting the minimum of social life. In Chinese tradition, a term similar to 'goddamn', 'Depravity

¹² *The Doctrine of the Mean* (*zhongyong*).

¹³ Da Ya-Zheng Min. *The Book of Poetry* (*shijing, daya zhengmin*).

of Heavenly Conscience' (*sangjintianliang*) is employed to denote that a person deprived of conviction in 'Heaven's Mandate' is excluded from human society despite his being still a biological entity. The implication of the term reveals that Chinese value orientation can never be separated from its cosmology and epistemology. A contemporary Confucian as well as Marxist scholar Zhang Dainian once told me that in western philosophy axiology, value is defined from the scarcity in market for its substantial need, slanged as 'shortage makes things valuable' (*wu yixi weigui*), while Chinese maxim would usually be 'morality makes human valuable' (*ren gui you liangzhi*), being material-oriented quality and human-oriented morality respectively. As 'material' may be traced back to the creation of God with his particles, 'human' to the evolution of Heaven's mandates, the Chinese philosopher takes it for granted that heaven remains the origin of both human biological being and moral sense. To Chinese philosophers or Chinese people at large, human morality or value orientation is a matter of faith instead of logic. Zhang Dainian is generally accepted as a contemporary Marxist among modern Chinese Confucian scholars, I would assume his explanation on the feature of Chinese philosophy basically caters to the modern Chinese Marxist.

Once commenting on the philosophical merits of Jin Yuelin's New Philosophy in a monograph entitled *On Dao (Lun Dao)*, Li Shen zhi expressed his disagreement to me, preferring 'Heaven's Dao' to 'Dao' in highlighting Chinese characteristic. He also insisted that 'Dao' could only connote epistemological onto instead of cosmological morality revealed in human involvement in cosmos evolution with heaven's mandates. When he discussed the issue of Jin's philosophy with me, he was already over 70, having much resource in his life experience and mental reflections, since the age of 70 is believed by Chinese Confucian scholars as one being harmonized with heaven's mandate. Li was quite in admiration for his tutor Chen Yinke, the most influential Chinese historian in the twentieth century, for his independent thinking. He stressed his tutor's being a thinker more than a historian in a paper entitled as *Independent Spirit and Free Thought, Chen Yinke as Thinker*. The anecdote concerning the thinker as well as historian goes thus: When the Communists came to power, Prof. Chen had fled to Guangzhou, yet he was invited by the Communist leader to return to China's Capital, Beijing, to take the title of high prestige, the director of Second Institute of History, Academia Sinica. He would accept the invitation under two conditions: one is that his institute would not prioritize in the principle of Marxism and Leninism, the other that Communist Chairman Mao and Republic's Chairman Liu should sign their agreement on his conditions for fear of future political persecution. People nowadays wonder how a pure scholar could dare to challenge Marxist ideology and Communist authority at the time when all intellectuals were forced to remold their ideologies. But it was morally reasonable for a Confucian scholar in his faith for cosmological morality, which despised secular political powers as inferior beings. Every human being with a morally epistemological heart partakes of holy cosmological heart, in this conscience he justifies himself as the 'Heaven Incarnate' (*tianren*).

Li Shenzhi also considers this feature of Chinese philosophy as the synthesis of epistemology and value orientation. For Chinese epistemology, Li gave it a Chinese term, Scholarship on Rational Objectivism (*xungenjudi zhi xue*), and for value orientation of Chinese genre, Scholarship on Heaven's Incarnate (*anshenliming zhi xue*). He proposed that the unity of these types of scholarships symbolize the true spirit of Chinese philosophy. His concept of Heaven Incarnate is from the ideas of Mencius in his justification by heavenly mandate. When Feng Youlan interpreted the spirit of Chinese philosophy to his American students he also hinted at the moral cosmos in the human individual heart, reinforced by the statements of Mencius for his "By nature all human fellow can be translated into saints like Yao and Shun" (*ren jie keyi wei yaoshun*), Xun Zi his "By cosmos entity anyone in the street might become Saint Yu" (*tu zhi ren keyi wei yu*), and Lu Jiuyuan and Wang Yangming (also called Wang Shoujen) their convictions in ethical universality expressed as "the streets are full of saints" (*manjie doushi shengren*). In his lectures to American students, Feng Youlan cited a story of how Wang Yangming's followers were enlightening a thief with 'morality makes human valuable' or moral spontaneity:

"A follower of Wang Shou-jen once caught a thief in his house at night, whereupon he gave him a lecture about intuitive knowledge (*liangzhi*). The thief laughed and asked: 'Tell me, please, where is my intuitive knowledge?' At that time the weather was hot, so the thief's captor invited him first to take off his jacket, then his shirt, and then continued: 'It is still hot. Why not take off your trousers too?' At this the thief hesitated and replied: 'That does not seem to be quite right.' Thereupon his captor shouted at him: 'There is your intuitive knowledge!'"¹⁴

'Intuitive knowledge' here is the term Feng employed in denoting human universal moral sense or moral spontaneity that every man justifies his social behavior by heeding to the heavenly mandates. By cosmic nature, even evil is potentially saint projected in the spiritual context of the Integration between Heaven and Human. Such a spiritual context has been the inevitable life companion to every human being, not exclusively to Chinese, with Confucian scholars epistemologically aware that Heaven has invested it on every human creature. Therefore, 'ultimate concern' or 'universal moral law' in the West has been demonstrated in Chinese philosophy as 'intuitive knowledge' which originated its divinity and fairness in Heaven's mandates motivating and manipulating a universe with human beings vindicating its universal benevolence. In Chinese moral teachings or heaven-centered philosophy, identities are heard, seen, and acknowledged among 'human' (*ren*), 'benevolence' (*ren*), and 'heavenly conscience' (*tianliang*), their epistemological sequence been ascertained in Mencius's phrasal paradigm: "The full performance of heart's function is to understand the universal nature, hence to testify the holy heaven mandates" (*jinxin zhi xing, yizhiyu ming*). In the Song Dynasty, Confucian scholars were much accustomed to

¹⁴ Feng Youlan, *Selected Philosophical Writings of Feng Youlan* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1991), p. 535.

saying: “In doing household chores of cleaning house and greeting guests one may accomplish heaven’s mandates” (*sasao yingdui, keyi jinxing zhiming*). He may not articulate heaven’s mandates, but his dedication and sincerity in regular life reveals the abundant message of heavenly holiness. This is exactly what ‘intuitive knowledge’ meant to Confucian scholars. At this point one may refer to a Kantian supposition for universal morality in pure reason:

“Experience also confirms this order of concepts in us. Suppose that someone says his lust is irresistible when the desired object and opportunity are present. Ask him whether he would not control his passion if, in front of the house where he has this opportunity, a gallows were erected on which he would be hanged immediately after gratifying his lust. We do not have to guess very long what his answer would be. But ask him whether he thinks it would be possible for him to overcome his love of life, however great it may be, if his sovereign threatened him with the same sudden death unless he made a false deposition against an honorable man whom the ruler wished to destroy under a plausible pretext. Whether he would or not, he perhaps will not venture to say; but that it would be possible for him he would certainly admit without hesitation. He judges, therefore, that he can do something because he knows that he ought, and he recognizes that he is free—a fact which, without the moral law, would have remained unknown to him.”¹⁵

In theoretical reason we know that man as a biological being is activated more by biological law—sexual urge and in a comparable situation criminal law would deter him from raping by fulfilling his biological desire. But when it comes to make perjury against a noble man, the very person is bound to hesitate in violating moral law, which Kant believed to be universally applicable. This universally applicable moral law is the origin of freedom which justifies the free will of God and human initiative in his faith in God. Again in Confucian illustration, such moral universality is suggested in the contrast: “Moral evaluation by heaven’s mandate justifies human being saint, while utilitarian calculation by biological law leaves human animal” (*chu nian shi shengxian, zhuan nian shi qinshou*). In this statement, Confucian scholars of the Song Dynasty intuitively exemplified human nature at different levels, prioritizing moral evaluation to rational calculation, as did in Kantian distinction between theoretical reason and pure reason which confirms the order of concepts: biological law for sexual desire to criminal law for gallows and ultimately to moral law for free will. While he insinuated the identity between human free will and God’s existence, Chinese Confucian scholars conspicuously declared that human beings are naturally born in the process of evolution by Heaven’s mandates. The central idea of Confucian teachings on the integration between heaven and human reveals why people ought to live instead of how they manage to live, and when Chinese people identify themselves as ‘heavenly people’ they still remain cosmologically and epistemologically moral. So in Mencius’ “To expand your respect towards your own parents to other’s

¹⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. by Lewis White Beck, (The Macmillan Publishing Company, 1993), p. 30.

parents, to offer tender loving care to your kids as well as other's" (*lao wu lao yiji ren zhi lao, you wu you yiji ren zhi you*),¹⁶ one may compassionately feel the spirit of Chinese philosophy as conceptually expressed in the integration between heaven and human, similar to the spirit of Christianity in the American saying "Live and Let Live".

Cosmos Mentality or Transcendent Sphere

As previously described, Li Shen zhi held firmly that the spirit of Chinese philosophy was illustrated in the unity of Scholarship on Rational Objectivism and Scholarship on Heaven's Incarnate, and Feng Youlan also stuck to an ancient allegation in spotlighting the spirit of Chinese philosophy "a gentleman would not be content before perfect virtue and cosmological doctrine is incarnated on him" (*jigaoming er dao zhongyong*),¹⁷ which he further developed into his theory of mentality. If Chinese philosophy could boast itself of anything spectacular, Feng's theory of mentality certainly merits its matchless entity since he is the only historian with three sets of *The History of Chinese Philosophy* as well as the originative philosopher of Neo-Rationalist Theory (*xin lixue*). As the cream of his 'Neo-Rationalist Theory', Feng confidently asserted that The Theory of Spheres of Living or The Theory of Mentality had never been adequately and comprehensively demonstrated in attesting the spiritual charm of Chinese philosophy. In the hierarchy of mentality in his theory, Feng arranged four levels of mentality, or if you prefer his term 'sphere of living', in its intellectual scenario:

"Man differs from other animals in that when he does something, he understands what he is doing, and is conscious that he is doing it. It is this understanding and self-consciousness that give significance for him to what he is doing. The various significances that thus attach to his various acts, in their totality, constitute what I call his sphere of living....we can classify the various spheres of living into four general grades. Beginning with the lowest, they are: the innocent sphere, the utilitarian sphere, the moral sphere, and the transcendent sphere....Of the four spheres of living, the innocent and the utilitarian are the products of man as he is, while the moral and the transcendent are those of man as he ought to be. The former two are the gifts of nature, while the latter two are the creation of the spirit."¹⁸

Now let us compare Feng's interpretation of the sphere of living with the Hegelian assertion of the 'absolute idea', which is the same creed as by a child for its biological pregnancy has been vested with all significance that an old man

¹⁶ Liang Hui Wang Shang, *The Works of Mencius* (*mengzi, lianghuiwang shang*).

¹⁷ *The Doctrine of the Mean* (*zhongyong*).

¹⁸ Feng Youlan, *Selected Philosophical Writings of Feng Youlan* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1991), pp. 562–564.

might have accumulated with a lifetime's experience. In Feng's scenario or rather in the spiritual context of Chinese philosophy, cosmic miracles are manifested in human mentality, much similar to the Hegelian 'absolute idea' where embodies conceptual charms on mental maturity in advanced age. In classic Chinese poetry these lines are frequently borrowed to emphasize an old sage sitting content wholeheartedly in his small boat on the lake in establishing a mental image of Chinese philosopher, who has transformed harmoniously a physical cosmos into his mentality of heart–mind reflection, much the same as an old boatman who has pacified all storms and tempests in his senior-aged life experience.

Chinese philosophy does encourage its undertakers to gain objective knowledge by way of observation, examination, analysis and speculation, etc. Nevertheless, its ultimate concern remains committed to transforming himself into a saint, a moral personality both transcending physical facets and serving as a role model for all human beings. When Chinese philosophers discuss value orientation, life philosophy, ethics, spiritual pursuit, self-realization and individual attainment, they invariably refer themselves to heaven in its multiple senses like transcendence, absolute idea, supreme authority, moral origin, life origin and nature entity, etc. In such reference, the subtle identities are revealed and expressed in different terms applied by Chinese philosophers as well as the masses of people in their contexts as 'transcendent sphere', 'heavenly mandate', 'cosmos mentality', 'moral heart', 'universal reason', 'heavenly divinity', 'heavenly manipulation', 'life hatched by heaven', 'heaven's catastrophe', 'blessed by heaven', 'condemned by heaven', etc. Once an American religion sociologist told me that he had never discovered an exception in the instant exclamation towards the happening scene of 9-11 terrorist attack but "Oh, My God!" He enquired about the possible response if the events spontaneously had occurred to Chinese, I immediately confirmed him Chinese must have responded the similar events with "Oh, My Heaven!" (*tian ah*)

Conclusion

Once Confucius exclaimed: "The Heaven does not say a word, but four seasons move orderly and natural beings exist harmoniously."¹⁹ And for this natural miracle he vested with it the moral authority that "A gentleman has three targets to worship, firstly to worship the mandates of heaven, secondly the man in high position, and thirdly the words of saint."²⁰ His epistemology in interpreting the cosmology of heaven in its producing seasons orderly and guaranteeing natural beings harmoniously can be reconciled with his worship toward heaven, integrating heaven with human in 'cosmos mentality'. If we observe the western tradition in its striking disparity between Creator and his creature, between

¹⁹ Yang Huo, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, yanghuo*).

²⁰ Ji Shi, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, jishi*).

Hebrew religion and Hellenic philosophy, or symbolically between Jerusalem and Athens, we are also in reasonable assurance that the Chinese tradition distinguished itself in uniting what has been opposite in the west into a moral heaven or a heavenly human being. Mentality or the sphere of living, at its highest level called 'cosmos mentality,' helps transform the philosophy of loving wisdom into human scholarship of becoming saint. If we have to address Chinese intellectual tradition in the term of 'spirit of philosophy', we prioritize first the term 'mentality' as the key word of Chinese philosophy, by which one may culturally attribute to religion, philosophy, politics, ethics, sociology, economics, jurisprudence, etc. In the space between heaven and human, all disciplines in scholarship are convened into 'Scholarship between Heaven and Human' (*tianren zhi xue*), in which philosophy or metaphysics generously share its transcendence with all disciplines. A follower of Chinese philosophy, be he one of Confucians, Daoists, or Chinese Buddhists, would not be startled to realize he is, by essence, a saint incarnate. In his being potentially a saint incarnate, he justifies his mundane sacredness and witnesses the spirit of Chinese philosophy. I believe, in the 'cosmos mentality' proposed by Chinese philosophy for every human being with an epistemological and morally universal heart, every person could be sanctified more sacredly than Karl Rahner's 'anonymous Christian': he is a 'human cosmos'.

Chapter 11

A Brief Introduction to the New History of Chinese Philosophy

Introduction

The New History of Chinese Philosophy (in 7 volumes) written by Professor Feng Youlan or Fung Yulan (1895–1990), with 1.6 million Chinese characters, saw its complete publication in 10 years from 1982 (volume 1) to 1992 (volume 7). The same 10 years witnessed his first volume at the age of 85 and his seventh volume at the age of 95. These seven volumes written in his last 10 years can best signify all the possible versatility in learning and brilliance in thought for a philosopher with a rare life expectancy. He distinguishes himself in this life work of seven volumes with permanencies of human sagacity exclusive to the confines of one nation and one era, and this glory of his owes a great deal to the social upheavals of his time, his colorful life experience, his peculiar endowments, his relentless diligence, his deep insights, and especially his sound-minded longevity. His contribution to philosophy has been widely valued as being monumental.

In his theoretical frame, the sources of Chinese culture have been divided into seven phases and they are: the Various Schools of Philosophers, known as One-Hundred Schools of Thought Contending each other, in the Pre-Qin Dynasties, the Confucian Classics of Western and Eastern Han Dynasties, the Neo-Daoist Metaphysics of the Wei and Jin Dynasties, the Buddhist Philosophy of the Sui and Tang Dynasties, the Neo-Confucian Philosophies of the Song and Ming Dynasties, the Reform Thoughts during the space of time from the Qing Dynasty to the 1911 Revolution, and the Communist Revolution in 1949 and New Philosophy of the Modern Era.

Volume 1: The Pre-Qin Dynasties

In Volume 1, Prof. Feng discusses the basic problems and methods concerning philosophies and their historical trends both in and outside China, taking 1/5 space of the volume as a general introduction to the whole work. This part of the work

also constitutes a panorama to the history of Chinese philosophy. The rest of the space of the volume portrays the social and economic backgrounds of the Pre-Qin Dynasties based on reliable written histories and, thus, bringing to light the making of various schools of philosophers of the Pre-Qin Dynasties and paving the way for readers to understand the developments of the various schools of Chinese philosophers.

One stark fact has to be notified for this volume, that is, a philosopher with high international prestige like Feng, is in such a confused mood to depict the general introduction to his voluminous work in the spirit of class analysis and class struggle in Marxism-oriented Communist China. But this was the time when the Great Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) immediately ended. Feng, like any Chinese, had to be influenced by Marxis–Leninist Dogma in aligning all ancient Chinese philosophers with either positive materialism or negative idealism. Therefore, in this volume one may read Feng’s commentaries about Chinese ancient philosophies in the obvious mood of stereotyped politics of Chinese communists as opposed to the philosophical observations on nature, society, and human life by Chinese ancient thinkers.

Volume 2: The Making of Different Schools of Thought

In Volume 2, the developments of the various schools of Chinese philosophers are described in great detail. There are only three schools surviving the very sharp competition and winning their popularity in the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period: the Legalist School of Autocracy, the Confucian School of Individual Idealism, and their Cosmo-Ontology. The School of Mohists also formed in this period but ceased to pass on independently, although some of their advice was taken both by the Confucian School and the Daoist School. The School of Names had been forgotten until the Neo-Daoist Ontology reestablished their value in the Wei and Jin Dynasties. As for Zhou Yi (*the Book of Changes*, or Yi Jing), traditionally believed to be the Chief Classic of all the Confucian Classics, Prof. Feng suspects its author to be Confucius and, insists that Zhou Yi takes its philosophical ethics from the Confucian school and its cosmology from the Daoist school.

Volume 3: Confucianism Decreed as Ideology

In Volume 3, the philosophies of the Han Dynasties (both Western and Eastern) are mainly discussed. Although the First Emperor of Qin succeeded in the unification of China by virtue of the Legalist theories, yet his dignity remained for only about 15 years, being the shortest-fated dynasty in China’s history. The emperors of the Western Han Dynasty drew lessons from the quick collapse of powerful Qin

and Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty adopted the advice of Dong Zhongshu, the most well-known Confucian scholar, to cut short all the classics other than the Confucian classics, making the latter an orthodox in China's feudal society for more than 2,000 years. However, within the Confucian school, there are also trends rivaling each other, known as Controversy of the Old and New Text Schools, being formed by claiming the authenticity of Confucian Classics after the Firing Books of Qin Emperor. The Old Text School stresses the independence and authorities of the Confucian philosophy while the New Text School highlights the authorities of governmental politics. Outside the controversies of the Confucian schools, cosmologies under the influence of the Daoist philosophy made considerable progress. Shunned by governmental politics, this trend of cosmologies showed more of the philosophical efforts, unfolding into the chief topic of the Neo-Daoist Metaphysics in the Wei and Jin Dynasties.

Volume 4: Neo-Daoism and Chinese Buddhism

In Volume 4, the Neo-Daoist Metaphysics and the Buddhist Philosophies of Sui and Tang are discussed. Prof. Feng divides the Neo-Daoist Metaphysics into three sects, namely the Advocates for "Nothing", the Advocates for "Things", and the Advocates for "No-Nothing". The Neo-Daoist Metaphysics is the reincarnation of the Daoist Philosophy of the Pre-Qin Dynasties but with clear distinction between cosmology and ontology. Through their sophistication of logical analyses a pure ontology has been established in traditional Chinese philosophy and this essence of philosophy also casts light upon Chinese Buddhism and Confucian Ontology in the Song and Ming Dynasties. The Neo-Daoist both inherited and renewed traditional Daoist principles in the true sense of their names rather than "Daoists in Wei and Jin".

The Buddhism of Sui and Tang is also depicted by Prof. Feng in three phases, that is, the phase of translation, the phase of assimilation, and the phase of evolution. By the end of the Western Han Dynasty, Buddhism had been introduced from South Asian countries into the capital of China but did not exercise much influence upon Chinese intellectuals. Feng believes that the not-yet-established ontology by then explains the Buddhist stagnancy in the following dynasties. However, the establishment of ontology by the Neo-Daoists provides a base for Chinese intellectuals to welcome Buddhism with her abstruse ontology. Following her introduction and assimilation came the evolution of Buddhism which later on developed into the Buddhist Philosophy of Chinese style, generally labeled as Chinese Chan Sect or Zen Buddhism.

Volume 5: Neo-Confucianism

In Volume 5, the Neo-Confucian Philosophies of the Song and Ming Dynasties are made the central topics of Chinese learning. Both Neo-Daoist Metaphysics and Chan Sect appear to accomplish the fulfillment of ontology respectively, but, to its very nature, each of them tries to find ways for individual realization, that is, how to assure the freedom of will. In order to tint the spirit of Chinese philosophy more vividly, Feng coins the special entry of the “the elevation of the mind” to equalize “the transformation of mental outlook”, which is an idiomatic expression of Chinese philosophers. The Neo-Confucian philosophers concentrated themselves on how to become saint and their philosophies are the natural consequence of the Neo-Daoism and Chan Sect. Thus Feng calls their philosophies “the theories of Dao”, meaning that the ontology purified through Neo-Daoists and Chan Sect is absorbed by Neo-Confucian with demarcation of their own built-in sects of the Rational, the Air, and the Mind.

In their arguments on how to become saint, the Rational Sect confines its efforts to clarifying concepts word by word, behaving un-saint like and thus inviting severe criticism from the Mind Sect, whereas the Mind Sect engages itself in intuition to the neglect of logical reasoning and epistemological demonstration, thus being refuted as empty mindedness by the Rational Sect. As for the Air Sect, Feng holds it in high respect, stating that the Air Sect properly combines the empty and reality, intuition and conception, into a comparatively high spiritual level. He is also sorry that the Air Sect does not make its theories a constant authority in a large scope of social activities.

Wang Fuzhi, in this volume, is regarded as the most important figure in the later development of the “the Dao Theories”, the synthetic peak on the combination of the Neo-Confucianism, the Neo-Daoism, and the Chan Sect; he also distinguishes himself most outstandingly in the whole span of Chinese philosophies in her feudalist societies as well. He makes summaries of all influential theories, thoughts, and concepts in Chinese philosophy. His works had been buried deep in the mountains where he withdrew as a hermit and were only rediscovered and printed by scholars of the Qing Dynasty.

Volume 6: Introduction of Western Scholarship and Eclipse of Confucianism

In Volume 6, the theme is the Reform Thoughts from the Qing Dynasty to the 1911 Revolution. The spirit of China’s reform of the Pre-1911 Revolution is how to make China powerful by learning from the West. This theme expands on what has been concentrated on how to become saint for individuals into the scope of what should be done to make a nation powerful. Here, we see that Chinese philosophers have shifted their criticism against “the Dao Theories” to Learning from

the West. Dai Zhen fired the most severe criticism against “the Dao Theories” by the famous “the murder of the Rational” and proclaimed to learn from different cultures. Unfortunately, Hong Xiuquan introduced from the West a religious regime and hindered China from her progress. Zeng Guofan again obstructed China’s industrialization by introducing administrative decrees into enterprises and business. Kang Youwei followed the example of the reforms in some Western countries and maneuvered an abortive Reform of 1898. Zhang Zhidong came up with an official conclusion of “Chinese Learning as Principle and Western Learning as Performance”.

Volume 7: Communist Ideology and Revival of Confucianism

In Volume 7, we have the contents of the Communist Revolution and the New Philosophy of the Modern Era. The Revolution of 1911 ended a feudalist system for more than 2,000 years in China. Advanced Chinese intellectuals now understood that what they should learn from the West is its “Democracy and Science”. This understanding bore China the fruits of Mao Zedong Thought, the Neo-Rational, and the Neo-Mind Sects. Mao Zedong Thought is the superstructure and official ideology of Communist China. Feng Youlan and Jin Yuelin are the representatives of “the Neo-Rational Sect in Confucian Tradition” while Xiong Shili “the Neo-Mind”.

The last chapter in this volume is a general conclusion to the New History of Chinese Philosophy in which Prof. Feng voices his conviction: 1. The tradition of Chinese philosophy does not concern itself with physical realization for a human being in contrast to Western sciences but exhibits itself in the pursuit of individual realization by the Elevation of the Mind. 2. “Compromise is the Best Outlet of Contradiction” will eventually prove to be the best strategy of mankind.

In the New History of Chinese Philosophy Prof. Feng gives prominence to the keynote of Chinese philosophy, that is, the pursuit of the freedom of will. He thinks that the Confucian school has accomplished this pursuit by abandoning individuality to the social rituals while the Daoist school social relates to the natural world. But what he thinks is the real accomplishment of this pursuit is to abandon the traditional intellectual commitments of both the Confucian and Daoist schools. Man can pass through the whole of the universe in his daily life by being thus aware. The thoughts of both Confucian and Daoist philosophers should be combined into the conclusion that “the Noblest Mind only Dwells in the Most Ordinarily Daily Life”.

Chapter 12

Daoism as Philosophy of Lao Zi

Introduction

Daoism or Taoism is one of the major intellectual trends in Chinese philosophy and spiritual pillar of Chinese faith system, philosophic Daoism or Dao Jia and spiritual Daoism or Dao Jiao being thus termed respectively.

As identical to Daoism, ancient Chinese used to describe it as the scholarship and worship based on its intellectual initiator Lao Zi or Lao Tzu, therefore we believe that he is the patriarch scholar and a peer philosopher to Confucius, the masterpiece of *Dao De Jing* (or *Tao Te Ching*, with 5000 words in its total 81 chapter) to his credit being considered as one of the greatest works full of creative originality in human culture. As a cultural legend, *Dao De Jing* has been enormously influential in molding Chinese culture, standing for natural philosophy in Chinese spirituality, and its intellectual merits being appreciated far and wide as source of wisdom in current transformation of human civilization. Being concise in words and rich in thoughts, *Dao De Jing* has been serving as the spiritual incubator for wisdom since its compilation, bringing out open-ended philosophic storage for human society, and its mental resources having never been exhaustive in human employment. The greatest contribution of *Dao De Jing* is its peculiar explanation to *Dao* or *Tao*, the key concept based on which the systematic *Dao-styled* culture is established and hence constituting the mega trend of oriental culture in the form of bilateral relations with Confucius and Mencius scholarship and triangular relations with Confucianism and Chinese Buddhism.

Dao as the Metaphysical Way in Chinese Faith System

In such an intellectual structure of Chinese antiquity, what does *Dao* mean in the philosophic sense for ancient Chinese thinkers? In short, *Dao* means the way to peace and happiness, providing guidance rather dogma for human behavior and

action. *Dao* tells tacitly the way under every one's foot, naturally leading to a bright future so long one walks on it steadily.

In the natural dimension of our current society, human beings are constantly bewildered with the predicaments of love and hatred, cooperation and confrontation, ease and blood, crises and hopes. If people in our society choose to transcend their respective dogmatic selfishness, to reconcile with each other in the principle of universal *Dao*, to be content with what they have and to live and let live as revealed by *Dao* in the natural world, they as human beings can certainly expect an amusing prospect paralleling to other natural beings in a harmonious world. If they stick to confrontation and lascivious aspiration instead of peaceful coexistence and mutual benefits, employing others as means to achieve one's own ends, abiding by the law of jungle, they will inevitably decline into miserable fate, fading away in both eternity and vitality by violating *Dao*. As far as we see that globalization or global village must be a social identity in a natural and harmonious world, so we understand what Lao Zi revealed to us in his *Dao De Jing* is wisdom for harmony. We may expect that each being of the natural world, especially human as most intelligent and moral being should contribute his best to materialize a harmonious world.

Natural Harmony Revealed in *Dao De Jing*

The central idea of *Dao De Jing* is focused on 'natural harmony', deviated from which other diversified aspects of philosophy and spirituality are explained by its millions of academic adherents and spiritual affiliates. The harmony proposed by *Dao De Jing* as its ultimate objective is explicitly expressed in "simple at appearance while natural at heart" (Chap. 19) and "politics without regulation while people without calculation" (Chap. 58), thus people in such a society enjoying their lives much like all the creatures in an orderly cosmos, free from mutual animosities, vanity desire, and essential evils. In the age of natural harmony society does need no more ritual and law to rule, even leaving no room for morality of Confucian humanity. This is just the Daoist or Taoist ideal of society which enables people to live peacefully in a cosmic nature family. Though we have not seen it true in our real lives, still we must strive for it.

Exploring into human society filled with desire, strife, calculation, and conspiracy, Lao Zi in his *Dao De Jing* proposes various constructive suggestions and methods to reconcile these challenges and confrontations, mainly listed as follows:

Mercy Revealed in Harmonious Nature

Of the "three treasures", mercy comes first. Mercy to Lao Zi means universal love, paving way to harmony in line with human nature. He thus remarks: "The saint should replace his own heart by the heart of his civilians. His mercy makes no

distinction between the kind and the unkind, thus remaining a moral mercy.” (Chap. 49) His thought also goes on as: “The saint should save everyone, leaving no one unsaved; he should cherish everything, leaving nothing not to be cherished.” (Chap. 27) Again he proposes: “The sacred virtue of nature is exhibited in bring forth every being without intention to monopolize it, in assisting others without self exaggeration and in guiding others without controlling.” (Chap. 51). It is not difficult to love those with same interest or with similar feeling, but it is difficult to love those who are not our similar category and even opposed to us like Lao Zi, who leaves no one and nothing unloved in a sense of a cosmopolitan heart to endear oneself to everyone and everything. The political aspect of *Dao* is also sensed in thinking what people think and in accomplishing what people want. As a political leader, he is advised by *Dao De Jing* to keep a natural and simple style in constant success, serving as mental purifier for aspiration and arrogance of any hegemonic leaders even today. Should political leaders of modern world follow the principles expounded by Daoist harmony in mercy, the world certainly has no other way to go but harmony.

Social Equity in Harmonious World

The unfair possession of social wealth often gives rise to political chaos, being deteriorated by polarized extremes of poverty and prosperity. The society tortured by unbalanced wealth invited severe criticism from Lao Zi in terms of its violating the *Dao* of heaven, which has political philosophy in “the combination between heaven and earth brings about water and air as natural nutrition, in such natural environment people are bestowed with equal resources without administrative decree.” (Chap. 32) He anticipates that human society should follow the way of heaven in disinterested raining opportunity and wealth. “The *Dao* of heaven assists the insufficient while detracting the superfluous, and the way of human society often goes astray as exploiting the poor to flatter the rich.” (Chap. 77) Therefore human society has been frequently infested by such a self-perverted way. And this probably is the very reason that Lao Zi strongly encourages human society to learn from the *Dao* of heaven, resulted in a harmonious distribution of wealth as the rich subsidizing the poor.

Benevolence in Harmonious World

Social confrontations in most cases are the evil outcome of reckless rivalries for power, money, benefits, influence, and reputation. People resorted to brutal forces to lord it over others often meet with their setbacks together with their victim rivals unless compromise is instantly introduced. In order to help change drastically such orientation Lao Zi proposes the virtue of being benevolent, i.e., the merit of

non-competition. His remark goes this way: “The highest virtue is like water, which benefits everything without competition.” (Chap. 8) He also takes the “principle of avoiding being the first” as one of “the three treasures”, insisting on being benevolent and female tolerance in the spirit of sacrifice and modesty as revealed by water flowering downward while moistening all living creatures. Human relations will be greatly improved if they adopt the principle of being benevolent, leaving no one desiring for rivalry and lordship. Is the principle of being benevolent and female tolerance the synonym of cowardice? Not at all! Lao Zi believes it to be the potentiality of life with all its resilience and perseverance. Non-competition is the base for strategic success when human virtue totally discarding its avarice. He philosophizes this virtue as “the victory of being benevolent over being competitive” (Chap. 78) and “non-competition invites no rivalry but wins absolutely.” (Chap. 66) The philosophy of non-competition indicates unparalleled assistance for the one who shuns human struggles and thus the harmony in benevolence distinguishes majestically the thoughts on harmony of Lao Zi.

Harmony in Integration

Contradiction has been viewed as mutual antagonism without compromise, but Lao Zi in his *Dao De Jing* disputes it by emphasizing the integration and combination between the two opposites. His idea of harmony in integration is often quoted as “complementary attainment comes from its opposite.” He also remarks *Dao* as “the principle of motion seen in the integration between the two opposites.” (Chap. 40) To him the creation in the cosmos is “the process of integrating the two opposites termed as *Yin* and *Yang*, i.e., the cosmic male and female, their integrated marriage guarantees fruitful births.” (Chap. 42). The natural elements of *Yin* and *Yang* constitute a universal balance which “combines the have and the have-nots, and complements what is easy and what is difficult” (Chap. 2) and “the rectitude in the form of curve, the dexterity in the form of folly, the eloquence in the form of stammer.” (Chap. 45) These statements express the interdependence and transformation of the opposites hinted as “right words in wrong mouth.” (Chap. 78) Should people come to the sense of this harmony in integration, they could make friends out of enemies, treasure mentality out of intellectual scandals, spiritual nutrition out of alien culture, hence promoting clashes of civilization into a melting pot with prospect of mutual benefits in peaceful co-existence.

Merits in Reconciliation

Competition without compromise in society often leads to disharmony, the similar demerits also arise from arrogance, cheating, and coercion. These are social phenomena Lao Zi repudiates at any situation and instead he would rather

advocate the opposite principle as “to understand the natural law is to understand reconciliation, hence to justice, hence to wholeness, hence to heaven, hence to *Dao*, and *Dao* stands for eternal security.” (Chap. 16) The wholeness revealed in reconciliation just represents the pith of *Dao* which harbors varieties of millions in the universe under the heaven, expelling any selfish calculation, and malignant trap. The person with *Dao* not only opposes the interest groups but also transcends contradictory involvement in the direction of reconciliation. The maxim of “concealing their smartness, dissolving their feud, dimming their lights and blending their identity with grain, this is the grand human unity with the cosmos.” (Chap. 56) The life policy of *Dao* can thus be evaluated as the mental sphere of identifying one’s heart with cosmic creation, which may not be easily attained but we must take initiative to learn to respect and tolerate others in line with *Dao*.

Peace as Mental Value

Peace cherished as mental value is the opposite concept of chaos, representing peaceful life of civilians. Lao Zi has it this way: “The apprehension of heavenly *Dao* attracts civilians far and wide, for they come to settle down and enjoy harmony in peace.” (Chap. 35) When *Dao* is widely accepted as promised pattern of life, people will gather together from all corners of the world, constituting harmonious community. Everyone in this community could “eat well, clothe well, reside well and live well.” (Chap. 80) Therefore, they are content with their happy life in such a peaceful community where their traditions and delights are well preserved. They are clear-minded about this harmony in peace, so that they insist on being free from wars. Lao Zi explains it furthermore, “weapons are articles of evil” (Chap. 31) and “where the army marches there can be no more crops, and famine always follows battles.” (Chap. 30) Civilians often bear the brunt of warlords with their normal lives demolished. That is why Lao Zi stands firmly against war and fervently advocates peace in social relations.

Wisdom in Anticipation

In his observations on human society, Lao Zi points out that chaos is the outcome of gradual conflicts and confrontations. So he emphasizes the importance of dissolving these conflicts and confrontations in advance before they develop into dangerous stages, i.e., “to tackle trouble when it begins to appear, to attempt what is great is to begin with what is trivial” (Chap. 63) and “to anticipate what has not emerged and to administer when disorder is still dormant” and “to be meticulous from start to end” (Chap. 64). These may be witnessed as the wisdom of people in anticipation and in achieving social stability and peace. Though being clear about the universal and unavoidable contradictions, still Lao Zi fervently advocates

taking initiative in dissolving them and in maintaining unity whenever they appear to start and develop, so that “the saint is never contracted with disease simply because he anticipates before disease develops into an infectious one.” (Chap. 72) Such wisdom is the expression based on observing our natural world and accompanied by our human wisdom such as Chinese proverb telling ‘the wisdom in anticipation of human beings is exhibited in their preparing umbrellas before rain is anticipated to come.’

Chapter 13

Zhuang Zi's Mentality of Cosmic Liberty

Introduction

Daoism for both religion and philosophy has Lao Zi (*Lao Tzu*) and Zhuang Zi (*Zhang Tzu*) as their patriarchal thinkers, with Lao Zi focused more on cosmological ontology and political philosophy while Zhuang Zi on cosmological skepticism and philosophy of life. When Indian Buddhism was first introduced in China, Chinese scholars would rather parallel its dependent origination with Lao Zi's cosmological Dao while its nirvana with Zhuang Zi's philosophy of life or mentality of cosmic liberty (*xiaoyaoyou*). But now when trying to introduce Zhuang Zi as an originative philosopher to western readers, it would be instructively appropriate to refer to Hellenic Pyrrho of Elis and his anecdotal account: Once terrified and threatened by a stormy sea travel, Pyrrho pointed at an eating pig careless of all risks and thus commented: wise man should be undisturbed as this pig! When travelling to India in the wake of Alexander the Great, Pyrrho met naked philosophers there and admired their tranquil, impassive, and non-committal mentality in evidencing the noblest virtue. And his idea of "peace of soul" realized in avoiding any definite judgment made modern German philosopher Nietzsche believe that Pyrrho was a Hellenic Buddhist. Thus, any philosopher who seeks for spiritual tranquility by rejecting all definite conceptions, ideas, and principles is labeled as Pyrrhonist. The French essayist M.E. Montaigne eventually depicted Plato and Aristotle as anonymous Pyrrhonists in their respective works. In Chinese philosophy, Zhuang Zi and his mentality of cosmic liberty could be proclaimed as much of a Pyrrhonist in his first two tenet-exhibiting chapters: Mentality of Cosmic Liberty (*xiaoyaoyou*) and Unified Identity for Diversified Cosmological Beings (*qiwulun*). These two chapters can be epitomized as achieving cosmic liberty by unifying diversity.

Chinese philosophers, mainly from Daoism and Buddhism, distinguish themselves from Confucianism as being "free from society", i.e., both Daoism and Buddhism focus their philosophy of life in other dimensions than human society, whereas Confucianism sees it as its ideological arena. In *the Works of Zhuang Zi*,

this distinction is made clear: “Confucius was once commenting on Daoists with his disciples: ‘Zhang Zi and his Daoist followers are guys free from society, while we are within society. It would be awkward for me to send for their memorial rituals. They take the dead as the companion returned to the cosmos maker, identifying their death as sharing the cosmic air with eternity. Life to them is like contracting warts and death getting rid of warts by bursting their pus. Life and death means no difference to such minds.’”¹ To society or human life and death, both Daoists and Buddhists had overstepped the habitual boundaries while Confucians were sticking to them, much the same as between Socrates in his belief of the body as the jail of the soul and Aristotle in his escaping death penalty by preventing philosophy to be sinned twice. Therefore, Zhuang Zi serves best to demonstrate the Daoist philosophy of life and the absolute skeptic in his mentality of cosmic liberty.

Philosophy is thought to be discussing the basic issues concerning cosmos and human life, but in Zhuang Zi all issues in cosmos are relative in their phenomena and such mentality can identify human beings with cosmic eternity. ‘If Isocrates is credible in Socrates’ “There is philosophy in the man”, then Zhuang Zi would exhibit the opposite: “There is man in Chinese philosophy”. To the Chinese, philosophy or cosmos is not objective knowledge to a subjective mind, it is the embedded identity within human life. The Daoist philosophy of Zhuang Zi will disclose all its fabulous facets.

Zhuang Zi: His Works, Language, and Style

As the patriarchal master scholar in Daoist tradition next to Lao Zi, Zhuang Zi is widely accepted as an influential philosopher in the Warring States Period of the Late Zhou Dynasty. Although being an omnivorous thinker peer to Hui Shi, the legendary versatile scholar resourced with five carts of books (*xuefuwuche*); he was styled by Sima Qian as “scholar with encyclopedic attainments, but can be essentially categorized as Lao Zi’s Daoism”.² What we know as *The Works of Zhuang Zi* consisted of three parts containing 33 chapters. Anonymous editors have arranged his work as the Inner Part (*neipian*), the Outer Part (*waipian*), and the Other Part (*zapiian*). Scholars generally agree that the seven chapters in the Inner Part had been written by Zhuang Zi himself, while the remaining chapters in the other two parts were basically assorted papers or thematic discussions by his followers in his lifetime and in later dynasties.

¹ *Master of Masters, The Works of Zhuang Zi in Modern Chinese Version* (*baihuazhuangzi, dazhongshi*), edited by Zhang Yuliang (Xi an: Sanqin Press, 1990), pp.88–89.

² Sima Qian, “Biographies of Lao Zi and Han Feizi, Historical Records (*shiji, laozi hanfeizi liezhuan*),” in *The Twenty-Four Histories* (Version of Simplified Chinese Characters) (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 2000), Vol.63, p.1704.

As it had been the bibliographic tradition, the works of master scholars were actually assorted papers, discussions, dialogues, and essays authorized to them in spotlighting a certain intellectual genre. Therefore, most of the works designated to a scholar during the Spring and Autumn Period as well as the Warring States Period were not disciplined work to their credit, but rather edited papers, essays, and discussions of their friends and follower disciples, like *The Analects of Confucius*, being the anthology of Confucius and his disciples, *The Works of Mencius*, being the anthology of Mencius and his follower disciple Wan Zhang, Gongsun Chou, and *The Works of Guan Zi*, being the anthology of scholars from Dukedom Qi in favor of his doctrines. Therefore, when we discuss the philosophy of Zhuang Zi, we mainly focus on the seven chapters of the Inner Part, with the other parts as complementary comments or resources in his spirit.

Another feature of the works of Zhuang Zi is exhibited in its language and literary style, for which Zhuang Zi is admired as one of the greatest classical liberal artists and *The Works of Zhuang Zi* is one of the appealing masterpieces of classical literature. Both philosophy and literature scholars and readers take *The Works of Zhuang Zi* as the model for esthetical merits in its charming phrases and majestic styles. In Chinese classical terminology, there is a peculiar language technique called “the six categories of Chinese character (*liushu*)”, of which the phonetic loan character was prominent in *The Works of Zhuang Zi*. For instance, in the chapter *Mentality of Cosmic Liberty* we have this sentence: “wild horses, drops of dirt and the micro-organism blown in the air are not absolute free from their constraints”. But here the word “wild horse (*yema*)” is a phonetic loan character, wild (*ye*) meaning “wild fields (*tianye*)” and horse (*ma*) meaning “travelling air (*ma*)”, so the original sense of this sentence is “the travelling air, drops of dirt and the micro-organism blown in the air are not absolutely free from their constraints,” they are categories of physical beings, inferior to the mentality of cosmic liberty dreamt of by Zhuang Zi. His exclamation about the desired philosophy of life in cosmic liberty is stated as “A universal travel is attained by riding on the cosmic principle governing heaven and earth and harmonizing with the changes (*bian*, phonetically identical to dialectics) of six kinds of air, i.e. male, female, windy, rainy, cloudy and clear. Such mentality is absolutely free from any constraints”.³ The similar expression is seen as “By riding on a flying dragon in the cosmic air, a person might travel beyond the boundaries of the universal four seas from the east, the west, the south and the north”.⁴ These are Daoist philosophical reflections on mental liberty in poetic essay and special language techniques in ancient Chinese, emotionally associated to the sense of history and romantic genre of spiritual freedom specific to Daoist thinkers.

³ *Mentality of Cosmic Liberty, The Works of Zhuang Zi in Modern Chinese Version* (*baihuazhuangzi, xiaoyaoyou*), edited by Zhang Yuliang (Xi an: Sanqin Press, 1990), p.7.

⁴ *Mentality of Cosmic Liberty, The Works of Zhuang Zi in Modern Chinese Version* (*baihuazhuangzi, xiaoyaoyou*), edited by Zhang Yuliang (Xi an: Sanqin Press, 1990), p.9.

If approached as the master of masters in literature, I would say that Zhuang Zi and his works displayed the charms of fables, metaphors, and hyperboles in unifying intellectual sophistication and stylistic romance. Thereupon, *The Works of Zhuang Zi* has been much academically attended to from the histories of philosophy, thought, literature, and esthetics. *The Works of Zhuang Zi*, like many other classical works of Chinese philosophy, contained much artistic and intellectual connotations confusing western minds used to the systematic expressions in Greek literature; this distinction aims at paying special attention to the literary style in reading Zhuang Zi and his philosophy. Three kinds of language techniques should be kept in mind in fully comprehending Zhuang Zi, namely, random words (*zhi yan*), loan words (*chong yan*), and fable words (*yu yan*). The random words have an acquired figurative sense from the alcohol vessel (*zhi*), meaning words uttered at the bottom of an alcohol cup identical to things in their natural essentials. The loan words in *The Works of Zhuang Zi* are the expressions of Confucius, Lao Zi, or their disciples, but in fact these were the expressions of Zhuang Zi himself, despite being uttered by those assumed intellectual celebrities. There are also many cases in *The Works of Zhuang Zi* in which moral lessons or philosophical imports were revealed by his fabricated fictions or tales, like the philosopher being transformed into a butterfly in his dream, the hypothesized happiness and spiritual pleasure of swimming fish and roc soaring in the sky, etc.

In the last chapter of *The Works of Zhuang Zi* entitled “Under the Heaven (*tianxia*)”, obviously written by his follower disciple, a commentary survey was made on all previous schools of thought before the Qin Dynasty, in which the catchphrase “Dao of Inner Saint and Outer King (*neisheng waiwang zhi dao*)” was first to appear and hence became frequently quoted in most of the Chinese classics. For its uniqueness in both philosophy and literature, *The Works of Zhuang Zi* has attracted many scholars to make commentary documents on it; some eventually constituted as a special genre of scholarship, e.g. The Daoist Metaphysics in the Wei and Jin Dynasties (*weijin xuanxue*) were basically the intellectual illumination and renaissance upon *The Works of Zhuang Zi*. To recall the popular remark from a Buddhist scholar on the academics concerning *The Works of Zhuang Zi* annotated by the famous Neo-Daoist Guo Xiang: “Guo Xiang is superficially known for his commentaries on *The Works of Zhuang Zi*, but a second thought would tell that it is Zhuang Zi who made commentaries on Guo Xiang”. Why all this paradoxical annotation and commentary? Guo Xiang's essayist style in annotating and commenting can never fully enunciate the intellectual and artistic charms and merits of Zhuang Zi's poetic genre.

The Dao to Metaphysical Emptiness

Dao in Daoist Tradition

Dao in Chinese means “way” or “road”, being both the method of doing or understanding something or road leading to a certain destination. But in Daoism the concept of Dao has acquired two senses in both the cosmological onto and

epistemological entity. For cosmological onto we have the statement in *The Works of Lao Zi*: “It’s only Dao that can produce entity, which contains male *yang* and female *yin*, and then their intercourse gives endless birth to everything. So universal beings permanently reside in the union of *yin* and *yang*, the macro-harmony realized in their intercourse procures cosmic beings in their limitless numbers”.⁵ But for epistemological entity, it has been stated: “To work on learning is to increase day by day, to work on Dao is to decrease day by day, being decreased to nothing before Dao can be attained”.⁶ Zhuang Zi was not much interested in Daoist cosmological onto but rather focused his attention on epistemological entity for his mentality of cosmic liberty, and his interest in this area shows the Daoist special method of comprehending the relations between cosmos and its humanistic implications abbreviated as the Dao to metaphysical emptiness (*sundao*). In *The Works of Lao Zi*, this epistemological entity was illustrated in two chapters as “The Saints often administer in nothing, preach in no words” and “Being silent one might be versatile, while being eloquent one might be ignorant”.⁷ Zhuang Zi fully appreciated the point of their epistemological entity in these statements, so he adeptly advanced it into the metaphysical emptiness matching appropriately with his mentality of cosmic liberty. Yet, both Daoist epistemological entity in Lao Zi and the metaphysical emptiness in Zhuang Zi did create mental puzzles for other observers. I here quote Bai Juyi, a very popular poet in the Tang Dynasty, who claimed to be intimate with Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism, in his skeptical comments on Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi: “To be eloquent is inferior to be silent, this is what I heard from Lao Zi. So if Lao Zi were worshipped as eloquent saint, it would be only ridiculously confusing that he authored *The Works of Lao Zi* in five-thousand words”. “Zhuang Zi identifies all physical beings with One, but I see only all differences in them. His identical One might be in universal nature, still I see the superiority of phoenix to snakes”.⁸ His criticism of Lao Zi was acceptable since the latter did not provide sufficient illustrations concerning its mythical method Dao, but as regards Zhuang Zi, the poet critic failed to see clearly what had been articulated by way of metaphysical emptiness.

The metaphysical emptiness was explained by Zhuang Zi in line with Lao Zi for his proposition “the constant Dao has no definition (*dao chang wu ming*)”, but turned it into detailed metaphysical being, which had no specific messages in terms of physical beings: “The cosmos originated from metaphysical emptiness, hence having no beings and names. That was the Dao as the Only One in the universe, formless to all physical beings”.⁹ In his logic, any physical being is something

⁵ Chapter 49, *The Works of Lao Zi*.

⁶ Chapter, 48, *The Works of Lao Zi*.

⁷ Chapter, 2, 56, *The Works of Lao Zi*.

⁸ Bai Juyi, “Reflections on Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi,” in *The Complete Collections of Bai Juyi’s Poems of The Four Categories in Chinese Cultural Essentials* (*sibu jingyao, baijuyishiji*) (Shanghai: Shanghai Classic Press, 1993), Vol. 18, p. 808.

⁹ *Heaven and Earth, The Works of Zhuang Zi in Modern Chinese Version* (*baihuazhuangzi, tiand.*), edited by Zhang Yuliang (Xi an: Sanqin Press, 1990), p. 151.

substantial, therefore can be specifically named, but Dao is the only metaphysical being, thus having nothing in substance and beyond any name. In the perspective of substantial, specific, and denominated beings, Dao proves to be metaphysical emptiness. This Daoist emptiness has priority in epistemology instead of cosmology though it was often presumed to be the creator of the universe: "To possess whatever is on the earth means to possess the grand article, which must be distinguished from other articles. To be the article distinguished from other articles is to be the super article. To know the grand article superseding and governing all other articles is to be king ruling all civilians under the heaven. Such intellectual attainment helps a person to travel freely within six dimensions of up-heaven, down-earth, east, south, west and north as well as among nine continents. Such a boundless travel means cosmic capacity; such a person means the most accomplished".¹⁰ The article distinguished from all other articles can be nothing but Dao, which is epistemologically superior to all articles. In the intellectual frame of Dao and Qi (physical beings or articles), Dao has no name in a substantial emptiness, but such emptiness justifies the cosmic richness of all physical beings. Thereby, what might have been the cosmological creator in Christian tradition has thus been turned into an epistemological entity, i.e., the metaphysical emptiness (*sundao*).

One and Many

In western philosophy, Plotinus also bears much similarity with Zhuang Zi in his epistemology and philosophy of life, to think of his fully aware shame that his immortal soul was contained in a mortal body and his carelessness about his hands and feet festered with abscesses and pus. His immortal soul embodies the epistemological One and the mortal body stands for physical Many. Now let us examine his intellectual peer in Zhuang Zi who equalizes Plotinus' One to metaphysical emptiness giving rise to physical beings. In *The Works of Lao Zi*, the Daoist believes that metaphysical entity means Dao, identical to One, which initiates the process of physical evolution: "It's only Dao that can produce entity, which contains male *yang* and female *yin*, and then their intercourse gives endless birth to everything". In Chinese, Lao Zi used the term One to denote metaphysical entity, and the intercourse of male *yang* and female *yin* to produce many physical beings. Concerning the relation between Dao as One and 10,000 things or cosmic beings in their limitless numbers (*wanwu*) as Many, Zhuang Zi has marvelously elaborated it to its epistemological accuracy: "If Dao is defined as One, how can One be pronounced as such? If Dao is pronounced as One, how can it be independent of language? The pronounced one and language could be two alienated from One, and then the One is compared with that two, so three can be presumed consequently. If being inferred

¹⁰ *Natural Tolerance, The Works of Zhuang Zi in Modern Chinese Version* (*baihuazhuangzi, zaiyou*), edited by Zhang Yuliang (Xi an: Sanqin Press, 1990), p.141.

this way, the quickest calculating mind would not be able to get total number of physical beings, let alone the lesser mortals. Therefore we infer from Dao the emptiness to the pronounced one and again to calculated three, we may not stop this calculation, especially when focusing on this pronounced one. So Dao as One may not calculate in the line of pronounced one, adding one to language in the form of two and other designated three, and so forth, etc".¹¹ In Zhuang Zi, Dao was explained as One in an analytical sense, moreover, it provided Chinese philosophy with a very original epistemological turn from various plausible cosmological arguments, similar to what Plato had done with Idea, to which all physical beings were its poor copies. To Zhuang Zi's One, "many" also fell into the category of numerical calculation while One remained an absolute metaphysical entity like mathematical Zero defining the value of the rest of other mathematical numbers. Like the American president being called the "first citizen" of the country, we can never be certain who are the second or third citizen of the nation.

Likewise, in its analytical sense, the metaphysical One cannot be affirmatively calculated as compared to Many. Therefore, when it had to be calculated it used to be negatively calculated to Many. This contrast has been popularly illustrated in a poetic style or in figurative form favored in poetry. To Chinese philosophical minds, poetry is the best form to convey metaphysical entities (*shi wu da gu*), which make up for where prose fails metaphysics in its affirmative account. I guess it might be the same case as happening to Carnap, a philosopher from The Vienna Circle, in declaring that metaphysics is an art like lyrical poetry. In epistemology, One can only be entity, equal to emptiness in the cosmological sense but boundless in its richness for human mentality rather than capability. Unfortunately, Carnap did not fully comprehend this, yet Zhuang Zi had attained a balanced comprehension on metaphysics as One in a poetic sense to Many in a prose. What Carnap stated "metaphysicians are musicians without musical ability" would be hailed as "metaphysicians are master musicians not limited to physically-conditioned musical abilities". Through Zhuang Zi, the Dao in Lao Zi had been turned into a metaphysical One, and the cosmic beings in their limitless numbers (*wan wu*) of physical Many, and their styles also had been in shades of prose and poetry, respectively. A famous modern Chinese poet scholar was much delighted by Zhuang Zi and named himself Wen Yiduo, literally meaning to comprehend the relation between One and Many.

Daoist Skepticism: Dao in Negative Affirmation

Zhuang Zi developed Dao in a seeming paradox of negative affirmation, which could be more persuasive in reading with exemplary stories. He agreed with his

¹¹ *Unified Identity for Diversified Cosmological Beings, The Works of Zhuang Zi in Modern Chinese Version* (*baihuazhuangzi, qiwulun*), edited by Zhang Yuliang (Xi an: Sanqin Press, 1990), p.26. .

peer philosopher Hui Shi in proposing the epistemological Dao to the metaphysical One: "The biggest One should leave no room for anything bigger, while the smallest One anything smaller (*zhida wuwai, wei zhi da yi, zhixiao wunei, wei zhi xiao yi*)".¹² In the empirical world, physically big things could be many occupying time and space, but the biggest One must be a metaphysical entity without room in time and space, similar to the smallest One. The point of such Daoist epistemology hinted at by Zhuang Zi was skeptical in the scheme of an abstract affirmation realized in concrete negations; therefore, Daoist skepticism developed by Zhuang Zi did not result in nihilism, as it would naturally occur in the western tradition, but rather in spotlighting the moral sense of Dao.

Idiosyncratically, Zhuang Zi never attempted to parallel relativism, skepticism, and nihilism in linearity to what appeared conventional in western philosophy, but drastically turned to affirmative Dao as personal life orientation, in which epistemology never traveled alone in a logical lane, but was accompanied and directed by philosophy of life. In *The Works of Zhuang Zi* an imaginary story was told to reveal the Daoist moral principle in negating all empirical life solutions:

When Zhuang Zi was traveling with his disciples in the deep mountains, they came across a lumberjack who stopped cutting the lofty trees. When asked why he gave up cutting these lofty trees, the lumberjack answered: "They are useless". Thus Zhuang Zi concluded: "These trees enjoy their eternal lives for being useless!"

When they came out of the mountain they were accommodated by an old friend. As the host proposed to kill a goose to entertain Zhang Zi and his followers, the servant requested his master which goose to be killed: "We have two geese, one can crow, one cannot. Which one to kill?" "Kill the one that cannot crow!" The master ordered.

The next day Zhuang Zi was challenged by his disciples: "When we were in the mountain, the lofty trees were abandoned by lumberjack for its uselessness; when we were hospitably treated with goose, the one was killed for its uselessness. How would you accommodate yourself to uselessness?"

Zhang Zi answered in a congenial smile: "I will accommodate myself between usefulness and uselessness. Nevertheless, my choice between usefulness and uselessness is not the most desired one, for it is still contingent to the physical dimension of usefulness and uselessness. If one can live with cosmological doctrine, he can be free from all physical contingencies...To live with the cosmological Dao is to be the logical creator for all creatures, then nothing can be logically contingent to Dao the creator!"¹³ This Dao creator is here turned into the cosmological emptiness to which everything claims its space and time except Dao itself, so the person with Dao at this point mentally enjoys the cosmic liberty. Dao

¹² *Under the Heaven, The Works of Zhuang Zi in Modern Chinese Version* (*baihuazhuangzi, tianxia*), edited by Zhang Yuliang (Xi an: Sanqin Press, 1990), p.466.

¹³ *Mountain Trees, The Works of Zhuang Zi in Modern Chinese Version* (*baihuazhuangzi, shanmu*), edited by Zhang Yuliang (Xi an: Sanqin Press, 1990), p.252.

is thus achieved by the person who denies all physical pursuits and who enjoys cosmic liberty by abnegating all cosmic physical beings.

Unified Identity for Diversified Cosmological Beings: A Mystical World View

Air, the Cosmic Substance

Any type of life in the universe would be categorized as living beings mandated mystically, that is the *Sheng Ming* in Chinese, *Sheng* meaning animated living and *Ming* meaning mystical mandates. But for a prerequisite to *Sheng Ming* or living beings there must be air for living, as air has been philosophized as cosmic substance. What contemporary western particle physicists would presume to be the Higgs boson was discussed as the cosmic air in *The Works of Zhuang Zi*. By observing the mystical immensity in the empty heaven, Zhuang Zi offered his hypothetical doubts: “The color of the heaven is deep blue, is it the true color of the heaven or the camouflage of its immensity?”¹⁴ These doubts seemed perplexing to Zhuang Zi, since human beings were limited in their animated lives while their intellectual exploration into the heavenly mystery would be limitless. And if we human beings are unable to get to the zenith of heaven physically, why not worship heaven in awe and enjoy the immensity of the universe with the mentality of cosmic liberty, living as an immortal incarnate.

In the Warring States Period, philosophers of various schools of thought discussed much about air as the unified substance filling the universe from the human body and the spirit to heaven and the cosmos. For the human body, if air is not felt from his or her nostrils or mouth, the body is assumed dead. So Guan Zi asserted: “The air is the suffusing substance for human body (*qi zhe, shen zhi chong ye*)”.¹⁵ A human body, only suffused with air, can then be an animating being. Mencius related the situation in detail: “The air is the substance to suffuse the human body (*qizhe, tizhichongye*)”.¹⁶ For Guan Zi, air had the shade of physical dynamics, while for Mencius, air had the shade of mental commitment. Yet, Zhuang Zi noticed the cosmic nature of air: “The maximum physical beings are exhibited in the heaven and earth. The metaphysical entity of the air is revealed in the interactions between the female *yin* and male *yang*. Therefore Dao channels

¹⁴ *Mentality of Cosmic Liberty, The Works of Zhuang Zi in Modern Chinese Version* (*baihuazhuangzi,xiaoyaoyou*), edited by Zhang Yuliang (Xi an: Sanqin Press, 1990), p.4.

¹⁵ Guan Zhong, “Reflections Part II, The Works of Guan Zi (*guanzi, xinshuxia*)”, in *Anthologies of Master Scholars* (*zhuzi jicheng*) (Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Press, 1986), Vol.5, chap.37, p.222.

¹⁶ Gongsun Chou Shang, *The Works of Mencius*. (*mengzi, gongsunchou shang*).

itself universally from physical beings to metaphysical emptiness".¹⁷ From inside the human body to the heaven and earth, air is pervasive as witnessing the mandated Dao. Scholars in the Warring States Period like Guan Zi, Mencius, and Zhuang Zi all believed that it had been associated with lives in the universe, either with the attributes of biological cells, animated dynamics, or cosmic substance. Even today we frequently hear the Chinese claiming: "What is vital for human life is the committed air (*ren huo yi kou qi*)!" and this statement could mean all senses from the human biological being to his committed mentality. At the time when Zhang Zi exceptionally prioritized the aspect of mental liberty to other aspects of cosmic air, the messages regarding air were interpreted as a limitless scope of intelligence among his peer thinkers. In the Song Dynasty, an influential Confucian scholar Zhang Zai articulated the coherence between cosmic air and animated dynamics for physical beings in the universe: "Air is a speck in the universe, floating up and down, and it never stops being so. This is what *The Book of Changes* means 'the intercourse between heaven male and earth female', and what Zhuang Zi claimed 'the micro-organism blown in the air' and 'the travelling air like wild horse' ". "When the air gathers, it appears to be physical being before the naked eyes; when the air disperses, it does not attract the naked eyes anymore". "The accumulation and diffusion of the air is much like the ice diffused in water, when it disperses in the universe without physical forms for naked eyes, the air can not be thus reckoned as non-existence".¹⁸ These words by Zhang Zai revealed the distinctive conception of Chinese thinkers about air as cosmic substance, its holy miracles exhibiting only in the process of gathering and dispersing, even failing the naked eyes, though it is still something existent. But Zhuang Zi did not stop at the physical attribute of air as cosmic substance, he wanted to convey its humanistic sense of mental liberty.

Formation of the Cosmos: Cosmic Air in Its Restless Movements

Cosmic Air in Its Restless Movements (*qi hua liuxing*) or the Grand Use of the Air (*da yong liuxing*) has been the catchphrase of Chinese cosmology, since Chinese thinkers have been of the conviction that the cosmos evidences the natural evolution in which air is the most vital and basic substance permeating everywhere. This conviction was articulated as "the unmoved mover" in the constantly moving cosmos by Zhuang Zi: "Anything like gathering air acquires its physical form, it will never stop moving till its extremity. In the cosmic process all physical beings

¹⁷ Ze Yang, *The Works of Zhuang Zi in Modern Chinese Version* (*baihuazhuangzi, zeyang*), edited by Zhang Yuliang (Xi an: Sanqin Press, 1990), p.357.

¹⁸ Zhang Zai, "Cosmic Harmony, Cosmological Enlightenment (*zhengmeng, taihe*)", in *The Works of Zhang Zai* (*zhangzai ji*) (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 1978), p.8. .

thus are competing and contradicting, never reconciling each other in a race track”.¹⁹ The evolution of the universe in its constant process is the embodiment of female *yin* and male *yang*, seemingly contradictory but in essence complementary. This is the Dao evidenced in all physical beings substantially assisted by the gathering and dispersing of the cosmic air. In this miracle of evolution, Dao is worshipped as God: “The miracle of the cosmic air is seen in its diffusion in all directions, leaving no space unoccupied. It suffices up in the heaven and down on the earth, cultivating every being in its physical form by its invisible hand, its name can be nothing but God”.²⁰ God is identical to Heaven, which both in Confucian and Daoist traditions can bring about everything under heaven. By describing the process of everything in a natural evolution, Zhuang Zi obviously inherited into the Chinese traditional cosmology in its evolutionary trait. But when Confucian scholars related this trait they tended to emphasize the mystic mandate of heaven, while Zhuang Zi shifted his attention to human subjective intuition, which might be proven beneficial to his mentality of cosmic liberty. When Confucian scholars asserted the mandate of heaven it was seen as the universal nature; Zhuang Zi promptly aligned heaven’s mandates with purified air—the spirit in human, highlighting the mental subjectivity in human body: “In antiquity, there was emptiness, hence no designation. But when One is proposed, no physical being acquires its form instantly. Physical being comes into Many when acquiring its form. What One to Many is what Dao to De. Before the physical form there already existed division between female *yin* and male *yang*, their interaction is termed mandate. When they begin to move or start intercourse, physical beings are then born. Physical beings with biological devices are thus showing up their forms. These forms contain their spirits and rules respectively, and such containments are called universal nature”.²¹ The cosmological Dao means One, but it may not automatically bring about physical beings as Many. Therefore, the cosmic air must be introduced before Many could be seen in physical beings including human beings, and this is the cosmic miracle partaking in the human spirit. So the cosmic air has hidden behind its pervasiveness the universal spirit, and that is why spiritual air (*jingqi*) is invariably associated with miracle (*shen*) in the permanent attraction to Daoist cosmology. Now I can tell a feasible liaison between Zhuang Zi’s Dao with the cosmological miracle of spiritual air and Spinoza’s God with its permeating attributes in a world of nature.

¹⁹ *Unified Identity for Diversified Cosmological Beings, The Works of Zhuang Zi in Modern Chinese Version* (*baihuazhuangzi, qi wulun*), edited by Zhang Yuliang (Xi an: Sanqin Press, 1990), p.18.

²⁰ *The Committed Mentality, The Works of Zhuang Zi in Modern Chinese Version* (*baihuazhuangzi, keyi*), edited by Zhang Yuliang (Xi an: Sanqin Press, 1990), p.198.

²¹ *Heaven and Earth, The Works of Zhuang Zi in Modern Chinese Version* (*baihuazhuangzi, tiandi*), edited by Zhang Yuliang (Xi an: Sanqin Press, 1990), p.151.

Unified Identity: Absolute Relativity in Empirical World

In the empirical world every physical being may seem to be different. Such observation might be absolute. It is absolute that everything is different and this statement leads to an amusing concept: absolute relativity. By this concept our argument has been paradoxically transformed from a cosmological observation to an epistemological conclusion.

Zhuang Zi had his formal argument about Dao in an analytical proposition: "There is the beginning for every physical being, but there might be another beginning preceding this beginning and then beginning will be regressed endlessly. If there is being, there must be non-being. And again there might be being and non-being endless regression".²² This reflection on the relativity of physical beings is made in chronological analysis. Combined with the observations on universal differences among physical beings, the absolute relativity is achieved by consensus of both synchronous and chronological reflections.

Before Zhuang Zi or even during his time, cosmology was explained in one way or another separated from logical analysis of pure form. Zhuang Zi noticed two conspicuous explanations: "Ji Zhen insisted on nature as the only source of cosmic evolution while Jie Zi advocated that there must be certain force in moving the universe".²³ These two explanations were from the Daoist scholars before Zhuang Zi, one stressing the "inaction (*mo wei*)" in the cosmic evolution, another focusing on the "action (*huo shi*)" in the cosmic creation. Yet, in *The Works of Zhuang Zi*, these two explanations were narrow-minded in their exclusive speculation. In Zhuang Zi's absolute relativity, nothing physical can be relative of its own accord, it must depend on other conditions like space, time, and device to change. Even metaphysical entity is relative to physical beings in their differences, its metaphysical emptiness confirmed by the substantial qualities of physical beings and its entity by their identities.

To make his concept of absolute relativity psychologically discernible, Zhuang Zi cooked up an image of a dreaming butterfly of himself: "Once I had dreamt of myself becoming a butterfly. In such capacity I was so pleased with light body and free mind, totally unaware of a clumsy human being named Zhuang Zi. All of a sudden, I awoke to find Zhuang Zi in me. This really puzzled me a lot: Who is dreaming at this moment? Zhuang Zi in the dream of becoming a butterfly or a butterfly in the dream of becoming Zhuang Zi. If we can not distinguish between Zhuang Zi and a butterfly in this context, we come to realize the difference of

²² *Unified Identity for Diversified Cosmological Beings, The Works of Zhuang Zi in Modern Chinese Version* (*baihuazhuangzi, qi wulun*), edited by Zhang Yuliang (Xi an: Sanqin Press, 1990), p.26.

²³ *Ze Yang, The Works of Zhuang Zi in Modern Chinese Version* (*baihuazhuangzi, zeyang*), edited by Zhang Yuliang (Xi an: Sanqin Press, 1990), p.359.

things and the natural changes that blurred them”²⁴ The story and image about Zhuang Zi and the butterfly would be an amusing challenge to our comprehension of absolute relativity. But they do provide three clues for us to approach Daoist cosmology in Zhuang Zi: to perceive Dao as metaphysical emptiness in ontology, to conceive Dao as constant dynamics for all physical beings in cosmology, and to feel Dao in personal life, from biological sensation to spiritual meditation.

Mentality of Cosmic Liberty: Spiritual Happiness

Nature and Freedom

The first chapter of *The Works of Zhuang Zi* is named Mentality of Cosmic Liberty (*xiaoyaoyou*), epitomizing what Zhuang Zi attempts to convey in his sophisticated epistemology and mystic cosmology. In the Daoist tradition, Lao Zi emphasized Dao as the metaphysical entity in an abrupt logic and as the cosmic dynamics in a mystic evolution, but Zhuang Zi quickly shifted that focus to the freedom of human will instead of natural obligation. Nature has its own laws independent of human will, so it is wise for human beings to follow the laws revealed in the natural world and Lao Zi favors a wise man in natural philosophy, from preserving his body to ruling his country in the principle of inaction. However, Zhuang Zi advocates being a happy man in fully understanding the natural laws instead of simply modeling himself after them. To him, a wise person might not be necessarily happy, for he is often engaged with the apprehension of being unwise or even stupid, and such engagement tends to distract his spiritual happiness. In comparing with natural wisdom, Zhuang Zi proposed a solution to the distinction and contention between being wise and being happy. This is something superior to being inactive in line with nature. To be natural is to be wise in Lao Zi is turned into to be free is to be happy in Zhuang Zi. The theme for Lao Zi is to see nature as an exemplary object, but Zhuang Zi is trying to reason the sense behind nature in unifying objective nature with subjective will, i.e., the mentality of cosmic liberty.

In Zhuang Zi's theory, the world without humans is that of inactive nature; everything bears, grows, dies of its own accord, but once the world had the residents of human with free will, everything would become relative, and this universal “relative” logically suggests subjective “absolute” in human comprehension rather than natural inaction. This suggests that subjective “absolute” leads to the human sense of cosmic liberty. For Zhuang Zi's speculation, even the legendary roc falls short of the human sense of freedom though it is assumed to fly naturally to the height of 90,000 miles. It does not enjoy any more freedom in

²⁴ *Unified Identity for Diversified Cosmological Beings, The Works of Zhuang Zi in Modern Chinese Version* (*baihuazhuangzi, qiwulun*), edited by Zhang Yuliang (Xi an: Sanqin Press, 1990), p.36.

terms of flying than a sparrow since they both depend on winds, wings, and their physical strength for the seemingly free flights. To depend on something means not to be free of its own accord, being the invariable constraints meticulously perceived by Zhuang Zi in what is otherwise extolled in Lao Zi as natural wisdom. An idealized personality will not be realized in following natural inaction, but rather subjectively initiate a mentality to explore what natural inaction might reveal to the human mind. Thus, Zhuang Zi imagined a type of godlike personality (*shenren*) in a concocted fable: There once was a holy mountain in which lived a godlike person with crystal clear skin and flesh like ice and snow, graceful like a virgin. He did not depend on any cereal crops other than exclusively drinking dews and inhaling wind, and he traveled freely in the universe by floating with clouds and riding on a flying dragon. Such a godlike person has attained the maximum virtue superior to inactive adaption to the natural doctrines: "The very person is perfectly free from natural constraints. The lands of grasses will be destroyed by rampant flames, but he is not burnt; The rivers and creeks might be frozen by piercing cold, but he is not frostbitten; The thunderbolts might strike apart the mountains and tsunami might roll onto the beaches with the momentum of an avalanche, but he is not frightened. He is thus secure and composed away from these dangers and harassments because he has transcended his body out of the four seas by swimming with the lights of the sun and the moon and floating with the cosmic air. If the course of life and death does not bother him, how can he be disturbed by human gain and loss".²⁵ Life and death come into the category of nature while human gain and loss into the category of society. A person who is perfect in transcending the natural laws and human desires is one who leaves nothing in the universe to be anticipated except his totally integration with the cosmos. When Zhuang Zi eulogized the perfect personality he really meant to propagandize the mentality independent of natural and social constraints. I would rather take it as the peculiar expression for spiritual freedom as being commonly expressed by many thinkers from other types of civilization. Spiritual freedom or how to attain perfect personality in the form of cosmic liberty has been a permanent theme for both western and Chinese thinkers. Like Plato for his image of escaping from the cave, the world of sensation, ignorance, error, illusion, and darkness, he has his godlike personality in One or Form or Good, the world of intellect, knowledge, truth, reality, and brightness. We have Zhuang Zi in his image of perfect personality in being One master for all physical beings, traveling in the universe with the cosmic liberty.

²⁵ *Unified Identity for Diversified Cosmological Beings, The Works of Zhuang Zi in Modern Chinese Version* (*baihuazhuangzi, qiwulun*), edited by Zhang Yuliang (Xi an: Sanqin Press, 1990), p.30.

Spiritual Happiness: Humanistic Revelation from the Nature

The godlike person or a perfect personality for Zhuang Zi is one who has attained the greatest possible liberty, and since the largest space or the cosmos can accommodate the greatest liberty, the godlike person enjoys the maximum liberty in the universe. But how can he achieve this? Just by his heart to mind intelligence. For this reason, the Chinese say that if you have a small heart, then heaven and earth become larger than you can feel; but if you have a large heart, then heaven and earth become so small that you can feel freely. So the human heart at this point becomes the cosmic heart as Confucians would say and the cosmic liberty in Zhuang Zi's mentality. And this mentality would mean spiritual happiness beyond human physical structure and social wealth as the humanistic revelation from the cosmic dynamics: "Whatever in the world under the heaven must be unified in One, i.e. its nature. If everything in the universe has its own nature respectively, there is no point in differentiating human bodies from clay drops and life and death from day and night. By identifying all universal beings with One, the cosmic nature, should one be still disturbed by human gain and loss?"²⁶ To Zhuang Zi, the person who manages to integrate himself with the cosmic dynamics has free access to the maximum happiness, in this context, the spiritual happiness or the happiness gained from the cosmic liberty

But this spiritual happiness is not exposed fully to the logical inference or physical parallelism; it is open to subjective experience toward a mystic entity like all universal beings partaking in Dao. This subjective experience in spiritual happiness, or mental travel in the universe, is illuminated in an analogy to fish swimming in water: "Once Zhuang Zi hosted his friend Hui Shi in an academic trip, and when they came to a bridge the host philosopher exclaimed by seeing the fish in the pond: 'The fish is swimming freely in the water and enjoys its life happily.' The guest philosopher Hui Shi was skeptical about this: 'Since you were not the fish, how could you know it enjoys its life happily?' Zhuang Zi responded upon this: 'You were not me, how could you know that I do not know the happiness of the fish?' Hui Shi answered calmly: 'No, I were not you, so I could know nothing about your feeling; and you were not the fish, so you could know nothing about the happiness of the fish.' Zhuang Zi then suggested: 'Let's come back to your doubt: How could you know the fish enjoys its life happiness. This means you know that I know the fish is happy, so I tell you it is on the bridge that I know the fish is happy.'"²⁷ The argument between these two eloquent debaters is often cited as a sample for the disguised displacement of concepts. I would rather consider the argument to be the demonstration of Zhuang Zi for his subjective experience in shifting Hui Shi's objective logic concerning experiential facts to the spiritual

²⁶ Tian Zifang, *The Works of Zhuang Zi in Modern Chinese Version* (*baihuazhuangzi, tianzifang*), edited by Zhang Yuliang (Xi an: Sanqin Press, 1990), p.273.

²⁷ *Autumn Flood, The Works of Zhuang Zi in Modern Chinese Version* (*baihuazhuangzi, qiushui*), edited by Zhang Yuliang (Xi an: Sanqin Press, 1990), pp.221–222.

happiness nursed from the host's mental liberty. Hui Shi proposed his doubts and arguments from the stance of physical being in its factual logic while Zhuang Zi advocated his philosophy of life from the stance of metaphysical mentality in its heart-felt cosmic liberty. In their arguments I could fairly appreciate the merits of both philosophers, Hui Shi for his scientific positivism as being favored by other religious Daoists engaged in cosmological astrophysics, alchemy, herbal medicine, and even chemistry, and Zhuang Zi for his humanistic orientation as expressed in spiritual happiness and mentality of cosmic liberty. Particularly, I would presume that the spiritual contribution in *The Works of Zhuang Zi* cannot be too highly eulogized for his turn in the Daoist tradition from the obligation to the natural law to the subjectively creative mentality of the cosmic liberty, and such a turn symbolizes the transformation of human reflections as natural gift to human spiritual creativity. This might be the reason why he paralleled "The happiness of swimming fish lies in its abnegating the boundaries between rivers and lakes" to "The happiness of godlike person lies in his rejecting the spheres of discipline".²⁸ When Zhuang Zi's philosophy was gaining popularity among Chinese scholars in the Jin Dynasty, an influential Daoist poet Tao Yuanming responded to his spiritual happiness expressive of mentality concerning the cosmic liberty with these lines: "With the backdrop of floating clouds, I feel sorry for myself in my admiration for birds flying high; when approaching the flowing river, I cannot conceal my envy at fish swimming freely. With the natural simplicity at my heart, can I really be burdened by those unnatural affairs?"²⁹ What are the affairs unnatural to Tao Yuanming? The social positions and material wealth accompanied when comparing with flying birds and swimming fish, these unnatural affairs could just prove to be spiritual burdens. In this comparison, the poet felt the same spiritual happiness as the Daoist philosopher Zhuang Zi explored in the mentality of the cosmic liberty.

Social Value of the Daoist Cosmic Liberty

In *The Works of Zhuang Zi*, we may read a lot of fables or metaphors in spotlighting those Daoist hermits for their social values against Confucian philosophies. For Confucian philosophers saint kings like Yao and Shun are the role models of this-worldly philosophy, but Zhuang Zi favors hermit Xu You, Tian Zifang, or even butterfly or fish in illuminating his other-worldly philosophy. By those figures, heroes or even natural beings comparing to Confucius, his disciples,

²⁸ *The Master Scholar, The Works of Zhuang Zi in Modern Chinese Version* (*baihuazhuangzi, dazongshi*), edited by Zhang Yuliang (Xi an: Sanqin Press, 1990), p.90.

²⁹ Tao Yuanming, "Poem to the Position as Military Adviser in Qu'e" (*shi zuo zhen jun can jun jinqu'e*), in *The Complete Version of Tao Yuanming in Modern Chinese* (*taoyuanmingji quanyi*), ed.& trans. by Guo Weiseng and Bao Jingcheng (Guiyang, Guizhou People's Press, 1992), p.111. .

or Confucian saint kings, Zhuang Zi manages to convey the messages of the limits in their social values of this-worldly philosophy concerning kings ruling the world under heaven, disciples studying hard to gain knowledge, people committed to their social obligations while commending the maximum values in the mentality of the cosmic liberty beyond all limits attributed to physical beings in this world. For Zhuang Zi, the much-anticipated social positions, humaneness in values, and painstakingly gained knowledge are secular beings subject to change and calculation relatively in the cosmos, and only the values superior to these are identical to the permanent eternity of the cosmos, enjoying the cosmic liberty, i.e., the absolute spiritual happiness beyond any relativity.

If a human body has to be surviving in the secular society or in this world, how could he liberate his physical body from all those social and biological constraints, such as social positions, financial wealth, and physiological life and death? Zhuang Zi provided a solution to these questions, i.e. “to communicate with the cosmic spirit exclusively (*du yu tiandi jingshen wanglai*)”, and this wisest social policy would enable him to surpass the natural fate of physical beings and the social justice of human beings for his mentality of the cosmic liberty. This spiritual freedom and happiness in the social values of absolute individualism is the Daoist tradition. If I were allowed to compare this absolute individualism with the relative individualism in the west to see its value in political and legal rights, I would insist that Daoist absolute individualism reveal the value of religious rights for the Chinese, since their ultimate concern is adequately expressed as godlike person or perfect personality. The Daoist philosophy, encouraged by Zhuang Zi in his mentality of the cosmic liberty, tells exclusively of the maximum liberty and happiness for every human being instead of the detailed rights inclusively relative to other social and legal conditions. Thus, the social values of Zhuang Zi are likely to be realized in the mental picture of nature instead of social and political institutions. If modern anarchism should be open for tracing its anthropological origin, Zhuang Zi and his followers would certainly be one of its earliest proposers and practitioners, as they did embody the absolute liberty and happiness challenging all human imaginations on the issues as such.

Dao of Inner Saint and Outer King

Heavenly Dao and Human Dao

Although the integration between heaven and human has been the theme for both Confucian and Daoist scholars, they also differ in their predilection in one aspect of Dao, i.e., Confucians having predilection in humans Dao while Daoists in heavenly Dao. Yet, Zhuang Zi added the heavenly Dao with the sense of human free-will, contrasted to the moral sense of social responsibility attributed to Confucian scholars. Thus, the heavenly Dao in the Daoist tradition was

transformed into the Dao of godlike personality which facilitates a Daoist in his fabulous free travel in the universe, the Dao distanced itself conspicuously from the Confucian one with saint-king personality realized in a limited dimension of the universe, the society.

In Chinese language, the phrase “to know something (*zhidao*)” is plainly popular as “to see or to understand” in English, but it bears the most profound sense in the unity of Daoist epistemology and cosmology since the phrase is the abbreviated term from the Daoist original “to comprehend the heavenly Dao” against the Confucian “to apprehend the human Dao”. When we read these lines in Confucian classics: “a gentleman should cultivate his personality, to cultivate his personality he should begin from loving his parents, to love his parents he should learn to understand human, to understand human he should refer it to heaven,”³⁰ we see the point that even Confucian predilection in human Dao would not violate the principle of the integration between heaven and human. Therefore, in the Chinese mindset “to know something” contains the message from instant phenomenon to universal reality. Yet the kernel value of the phrase bears a heavy trace of Daoist philosophy, especially of Zhuang Zi. Between the heavenly and human Dao, there is a wide spectrum of intellectual endeavor, which Zhuang Zi explored thus: “To know what the heaven manipulates and what the human manages is to know what can be perfect. What the heaven actually manipulates is whatever has been brought about under it. What the human manages is whatever has been accomplished in the process he survives his ignorance and lives to his natural term”.³¹ Both Confucian and Daoist philosophers have their attentions fixed on the unity between the heavenly Dao and the human Dao, but Confucians aim at achieving the unity for social rule under which everyone is inspired to be saint-king, while Daoists, typically, Zhuang Zi and his followers, for spiritual happiness in which everyone is encouraged to be identical to Dao, the sense of “knowing something (*zhidao*)” or to comprehend the heavenly Dao. The integration between heaven and human, in the Confucian ideological scheme, targets at social ethics under the guidance of which the saint-kings embody the human Dao justified by the heavenly Dao, while in the Daoist mental picture, with the Daoist metaphysics in the Wei and Jin Dynasties where Zhuang Zi was prioritized to Lao Zi, the integration between the heavenly Dao and the human Dao adjusts its scholarship directly to godlike personality much superior to Confucian saint-kings with equal supremacy of universe, where Daoists enjoyed a free mental travel over society where Confucian saints were chained to various ethical obligations: “There are two major precepts in the world under the heaven: one being predestined and one being obliged. Children are predestined to love their parents and this is irresistible complex at heart. Subjects are obliged to serve their monarch and there is no place under the heaven where there is no monarch as ruler. These are something

³⁰ *The Doctrine of the Mean* (zhongyong).

³¹ *Master of Masters, The Works of Zhuang Zi in Modern Chinese Version* (*baihuazhuangzi, dazhongshi*), edited by Zhang Yuliang (Xi an: Sanqin Press, 1990), p.76.

unavoidable in the world and they are thus admonished as major precepts”.³² Although such statement was quoted as Confucian sayings in a fable in *The Works of Zhuang Zi*, it accurately reflects the Daoist attitude toward the relations between the heavenly Dao and the human Dao, with Daoist advocacy of independent and free personality in defiance of Confucian ethics of social obligations. For the time when the Daoist philosophy of Zhuang Zi was welcomed to an extent even Lao Zi, the Daoist patriarchal scholar, was eclipsed, there was a striking catchphrase to mirror Daoist criticism against Confucianism regarding the heavenly Dao and the human Dao: “Adhering to the Dao of nature by repudiating Confucian ethics”. For Zhuang Zi, the Confucianism in the human Dao symbolizes both boundaries of space and mentality, thus insufficient to inspire a person in his pursuit of mental happiness in the universe.

In the spectrum of personality proposed by Zhuang Zi, there was still the position of Confucian faith in the human Dao, though it is related as inferior to the heavenly Dao in the Daoist tradition. From human society to the natural cosmos, Zhuang Zi arranged a philosophical order of personality: “To be identical with cosmic entity is called Heaven Incarnate (*tianren*); to be identical with cosmic dynamics is called Godlike Person (*shenren*); to be identical with cosmic reality is called Perfect Personality (*zhiren*). To be a saint (*shengren*) is to take the Heavenly Dao as the metaphysical entity, to take virtue as the justification, to take the human Dao as the policy to adapt to changes. To be a king (*junzi*) is to take the human Dao as the virtue, to take justice as the truth, to take rites as the guidance, to take music as means to social harmony, to take humaneness and mercy as the motive of policies. To be officials (*baiguan*) is to take legality as the rule, to take gentle-person as role models, to take popular judgment as evidence, to take coherence as administration, to take mathematical numbers as the order in dealing with official affairs. To be plebeians (*min*) is to entrust their business to officials, to take cloth and food as their chief concerns, to take their offspring, substantial storage, old, weak, orphanage and solitary as the secular commitments”.³³ There are seven classes of personality in the spectrum from the human Dao to the heavenly Dao, in which the personality favored by Confucians is comparatively lower down from saint to the populace. Above the saint class there are the personalities advocated by Daoists, being freer and freer from the social, natural, physical constraints until identifying with cosmic entity. Such personality may not be true in any physical sense, but Zhuang Zi imagined it to be the Daoist mentality of the cosmic liberty, embodying the heavenly Dao in Daoist philosopher. This imagined personality is often expressed in the term of the heavenly master (*tianshi*) or the Dao Incarnate (*daoren*) to respect the highly honored Daoist religious leaders or masters.

³² *Human Secularism, The Works of Zhuang Zi in Modern Chinese Version* (*baihuazhuangzi, renjianshi*), edited by Zhang Yuliang (Xi an: Sanqin Press, 1990), p.51.

³³ *Under the Heaven, The Works of Zhuang Zi in Modern Chinese Version* (*baihuazhuangzi, tianxia*), edited by Zhang Yuliang (Xi an: Sanqin Press, 1990), p.453.

Dao of Inner Saint and Outer King

The phrase “Dao of Inner Saint and Outer King” was first to appear in *The Works of Zhuang Zi* in the chapter “Under the Heaven (*tianxia*)”, which was proposed as the ideal model of social rule in salvaging the Big Chaos in the world. Obviously it was put forward as a criteria to evaluate the schools of thought in the world under the heaven instead of identity to the heavenly Dao. Zhuang Zi was living in the Warring States Period, so he had to publicize his political comments on the social affairs in echoing other peer schools of thought assumed to be one hundred of them, with Confucians in particular. The Big Chaos lasted several 100 years from The Spring and Autumn Period when Lao Zi and Confucius discussed the relations between the Natural Dao and Social Humaneness to The Warring States Period when Zhuang Zi and Mencius discussed the relations between the Mentality of the Cosmic Liberty and the Great Husband of Righteousness. The very social context forced the Daoist philosophers like Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi to reflect the ideally feasible doctrines to pacify the disordered human society, evidencing the validity and reality of their philosophy, respectively despite the fact that Daoist had their prioritized interest in the natural world rather than human society. Some modern scholars noticed the phrase “Dao of Inner Saint and Outer King” to be exceptionally congruent to Confucian themes, they eventually concluded that the chapter where the phrase first appeared was written by a Confucian scholar. But this is not historically accountable, for the Daoists had their concerns for monarchical politics as they served as the official historians. In the Han Dynasty immediately following the dynasty when Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi were contributing their reflections on the chaotic society the official historians still acknowledged that “Those of the Daoist school had their origin in the official historians. By studying the historical examples of success and failure, preservation and destruction, and calamity and prosperity, from ancient to recent times, they learned how to hold what is essential and to grasp the fundamental. They guarded themselves with purity and emptiness, and with humbleness and meekness maintained themselves. These were the tactics of king basking in full sunshine from the south”.³⁴ And this statement could also be echoed positively by another official historian Sima Qian when he assorted Lao Zi and legalist hero Han Fei in the same category to suggest that social politics and administration were still in the domain of Daoist concern though not its ultimate concern. So in *The Works of Zhuang Zi* we have chapters of Human Secularism (*renjianshi*), Responses to Kings (*yingdiwang*), Heavenly Dao (*tiandao*), and Abdication (*rangwang*) in which themes concerning secular politics and social ethics were frequently dealt with in comparing Daoist doctrines with those of Confucian and Legalist traditions. All these comparisons would disclose the message that Daoists had applied their nature-oriented philosophy in exploring

³⁴ Ban Gu, “Assorted Scholarships, The History of Han Dynasty (*hanshu, yiwenzhi*),” in *The Twenty-Four Histories* (Version of Simplified Chinese) (Beijing: Zhonghuashuju Press, 2000), Vol.30, p.1370.

secular politics and social ethics, or otherwise the principle of inaction expressed in Dao of Inner Saint and Outer King in Zhuang Zi.

Even dealing with the much similar theme in the identical term of saint and king to that of Confucians, Zhuang Zi just reiterated what had been stressed in Lao Zi as the politics of inaction, the social and political application of his nature-oriented philosophy in spite of Zhuang Zi's predilection for individual liberty. The Daoist policy of inaction in Lao Zi was illuminated coherently in Zhuang Zi as evidenced Dao of Inner Saint and Outer King: "In antiquity the successful king ruled the world under the heaven by not manipulating though he was resourceful in all means, by keeping silent though he was a peerless orator, and by not acting though he had the capacity to vanquish".³⁵ In short, contrasting to Confucian type of secular philosophy in "attempting the impossible beyond one's capacity", Daoist attitudes toward political philosophy and social ethics can be depicted as "never attempting the possible within one's capacity". Eventhough Dao of Inner Saint and Outer King had been the common theme for both Confucian and Daoist schools of thought, they differed drastically in their motivations and methodologies appropriate to their cosmologies and value orientations. For Confucians, Dao must be personified in a saint who has a kind heart and moral commitment which entitled him to be a king sooner or later; but for Daoist, Dao has its absolute entity as the origin and dynamics of the cosmos which man must model himself after or must take fullest initiative in identifying with before a king can be renounced.

Since Dao of Inner Saint and Outer King was proposed as a Daoist response to the Big Chaos when the rule of rites and music had been brutally violated, Zhuang Zi implied its political authenticity in the Rule of Inaction (*wuwei er zhi*), superior to both Confucians in their rule of virtue and Legalists in their rule of legality. In *The Works of Zhuang Zi*, the order of merits had been introduced into the rule of society by comparing these three influential schools of thought: "In the antiquity, the one who comprehends the heavenly Dao manages to know cosmological entity before the cosmological dynamics, then to know humanness and righteousness, then to know phenomena and their categories, then to know their governing laws, then to know their hypotheses and applications, then to know their truth and fallacies, then to know their awards and penalties. With appropriate awards and penalties, both the wise and the foolish know how to behave, both the noble and the lowly are positioned accordingly, the talents and the ordinary are able to acting in their capacities and credits. To serve the high ranks and to administer the lower ranks, to manage the business and to cultivate oneself in the principle of natural inaction revealed in the heavenly Dao instead of intellectual strategies contrived from human Dao, is to rule with grand peace. Such rule is the zenith of politics".³⁶ These lines of Zhuang Zi can be taken as the explicit illustrations on Dao of Inner

³⁵ *Heavenly Dao, The Works of Zhuang Zi in Modern Chinese Version* (*baihuazhuangzi, tiandao*), edited by Zhang Yuliang (Xi an: Sanqin Press, 1990), p.167.

³⁶ *Heavenly Dao, The Works of Zhuang Zi in Modern Chinese Version* (*baihuazhuangzi, tiandao*), edited by Zhang Yuliang (Xi an: Sanqin Press, 1990), p.170. .

Saint and Outer King in which Confucian and Legalist principles of politics and rules were compared inferior to the Daoist ones. And his observations and reflections in line with Dao of Inner Saint and Outer King were somehow evidenced in the ensuing historical events in Chinese society. By the principle of military conquest and awards and civil criminal penalties, the Legalist Qin managed to have united the warring states, but quickly collapsed 15 years after its spectacular establishment. The succeeding Han Dynasty immediately introduced the Daoist principle of inaction to bring about social peace and economic prosperity in its first part of reign, but later on was reconciled with Confucian ethics as political doctrines and legislative guidelines in the height of the Han Dynasty, which constructed the prototype of Chinese rule of both Confucian ethics and Legalist institutions for the consecutive 2000 years. As for Daoist principle in Dao of Inner Saint and Outer King, it obviously did not work out as effective as the combination of Confucian ethics and Legalist institutions, being adapted gracefully to the spiritual happiness of individual liberty in the Wei and Jin Dynasties. In the first Big Chaos when the rites and music were flagrantly violated, we had Confucian scholars like Confucius and Mencius to contribute human ethics to compensate for institutional rules installed by Duke Zhou, similarly in the second Big Chaos in the Wei and Jin Dynasties when China was split into South and North by northern marauding barbarians, those Daoist metaphysicians like Guo Xiang and Xiang Xiu revived and promoted Daoist individualism and subjective mentality of a peculiar genre.

The Impact of Zhuang Zi

Though Zhuang Zi lived in the Warring States Period of the Late Zhou Dynasty and his essays and those of his followers' in *The Works of Zhuang Zi* were mostly written in the same period or the ensuing years after him, still his intellectual influence mainly in the Wei and Jin Dynasties. He belonged to both the Daoist philosophers like Lao Zi and Yang Zhu and the creative thinkers among One Hundred Schools of Thought before the Qin Dynasty, but he distinguished himself from both other Daoists and creative thinkers in the One Hundred Schools of Thought in stressing individual liberalism instead of social responsibility and spiritual happiness instead of sensational comfort and bodily preservation. Comparing to Confucians, Mohists and Legalists, Zhuang Zi and his followers were less socially oriented, for they tended to be more individual liberalists; to Daoist Lao Zi, they loved to be more initiative in modeling themselves after the natural Dao; to Daoist Yang Zhu, they cherished spiritual happiness more than physiological satisfaction. Their value was typically realized in the intellectuals in the Wei and Jin Dynasties, otherwise termed as Romantic Scholars in the Wei and Jin (*weijin mingshi*), so much the same as the Daoist Lao Zi had his natural philosophy realized in the Rule of Inaction (*wuwei er zhi*) in the beginning of the Han Dynasty and the Daoist Yang Zi had his hedonism realized in the religious Daoism of the

immortals in the late years of the Han Dynasty, or the Confucians had their value authorized as the main ideology in its heyday of the Han Dynasty.

In the Neo-Daoist Metaphysics in the Wei and Jin Dynasties (*weijin xuanxue*), there were three masterpieces known as “three classics of metaphysics (*sansxuan*)”, namely *The Works of Lao Zi*, *The Book of Changes*, and *The Works of Zhuang Zi*. *The Works of Lao Zi* was credible for ontological aspect of the Neo-Daoist Metaphysics while *The Book of Changes* for cosmological aspect of the Neo-Daoist Metaphysics. Only *The Works of Zhuang Zi* had the most visible and direct influence on the value orientation of the Neo-Daoist Metaphysics which would be identical to the Metaphysical Romance (*fengliu*) of the Neo-Daoists. If we acknowledge the Neo-Daoist Metaphysics as the quintessential mentality of the Wei and Jin Dynasties, we should have readily admitted that the Metaphysical Romance was the mental traits embodied on those Neo-Daoists mainly depicted in *The Essays and Criticism* (*shishuoxinyu*). A careful observation and comparison would tell that *The Works of Zhuang Zi* had much impact on *The Essays and Criticism* in epistemology and value orientation. We could also comfortably see the impact of Zhuang Zi on the Neo-Daoists in their mentalities of metaphysical romance (*fengliu ping*).

As for the mentality of metaphysical romance, Mr. Feng Youlan (Fung Yulan) had defined it in four dimensions, that is, “metaphysical heart (*xuanxin*)”, “fascinating insights (*dongjian*)”, “aesthetic amusement (*miaoshang*)” and “affectionate sincerity (*shenqing*)”.³⁷ For metaphysical heart, he invested with it the mental capacity to explore the human sense of the universe; for fascinating insights, he differentiated it from the rational investigation as the intuitional enlightenment; for aesthetic amusement, he cast light on metaphysical facets of physical beings; for affectionate sincerity, he expanded human subjective feelings toward those insentient beings.

I would basically agree with what Mr. Feng concluded as the merits of the mentality of metaphysical romance to see the philosophical impact on the Neo-Daoists in the Wei and Jin Dynasties. Still I would positively extend my comments to Zhuang Zi for his impacts on the intellectuals in Chinese history and its possible values for human beings at this globalized age, since he initiated his philosophical reflections from the perspective of the universe and aimed at achieving the mentality of the cosmic liberty. By the mentality of the cosmic liberty, I have no hesitation of any sort to label Zhuang Zi as an absolute mental liberalist for maximum spiritual happiness, kind of Chinese Daoist godlike personality that can definitely compete with all other human intellectual liberalists. Such a liberalist may not procure social and political rights ostentatiously proclaimed in the west, but may furnish human mind with psychological peace and spiritual happiness that can be otherwise altered, leaving much appreciated merits for Chinese religion and literature. These merits could be visibly detected when we read the Confucian scholars in the Song and Ming Dynasties in their statements like “to testify a

³⁷ Feng Youlan, “On Metaphysical Romance (*lun fengliu*)”, in *The Complete Works of Three Pines Hall* (*sansongtang quanji*) (Zhengzhou: Henan People’s Press, 2000), Vol.5, pp.309–317.

cosmic heart between heaven and earth”, “the greatest undertaking by Saint Kings Yao and Shun is nothing more than a speck of dust in the universe”, “universe is not larger than my heart, and my heart is not smaller than universe (or ‘my heart is identical to the cosmos, and the vice versa’)” and “a big man is one who identifies himself with all universal beings”. Therefore, the psychological and spiritual implications of Zhuang Zi’s philosophy in the form of the cosmic liberty were also frequently mirrored in Chinese Buddhist doctrines and literature, especially when Chinese Chan Buddhists fervently focused their mental enlightenment on their hearts intuitionally coinciding with the cosmic dynamics and Chinese poets when they claimed metaphysical messages mystically beyond words and lines. In Zhuang Zi and the Neo-Daoist Metaphysics, all natural beings were vested with subjective aesthetics, such like butterfly, roc and fish as symbols of liberty at different levels, and pine trees, bamboos and plum blossoms, the human moral friends in the frozen winter (*suihansanyou*), and they were the images majestically favored in Chinese literature and arts. At the present when the environmental ethics is widely gaining its acceptance as global values, we would be immensely benefited from Zhuang Zi’s philosophy in advocating human mentality of the cosmic liberty. The human innate dignity cannot be calculated in whatsoever computer might, but can only be subjectively evaluated with a cosmic heart affiliated to a godlike personality and the various kinds of psychological and physiological troubles caused by one-dimensional material consumerism can be largely compensated by spiritual happiness envisioned in Zhuang Zi. Since his philosophy was framed against an imagined universe, no psychological and physical boundaries of mind-sets and time-space should be setup to obstruct its modern survival and application. If one gets too much frustrated on the merits and demerits of western disciplined philosophy and religion, one might divert his heart and mind to Zhuang Zi for a peaceful and artistic soul travelling with his mentality of cosmic liberty by a unified identity for diversified cosmological beings.

Chapter 14

The Philosophical Aspects of Chinese Buddhism

Introduction

Chinese Buddhism, as a comprehensive systematic thought, consists of cosmology, epistemology, and value orientation or life philosophy of its own character. Its own specialty vindicates the key note of value orientation in a reciprocal resonance to its cosmology and epistemology. In the context of its Dependent Origination(*yuanqi*), its cosmology immensely transcends the cycle of birth, growth, and death though originated in it, its epistemology targets at transcending all empirical knowledge by intuitional analysis, and its value orientation glorifies itself at achieving *prajñā bodhisattva* via enlightened nirvana. Its enlightened subjectivity in value orientation integrates the Buddhist cosmology based on dependent origination elaborately that no nirvana could be independently illustrated without referring to *prajñā*, i.e., no ethics could be ever attained without being elucidated by way of epistemology in western philosophy.

Buddhism in Ancient India appeared to be religious in various forms, but it, in essence, had ingrained philosophical notions of its own peculiarity. These notions, compared with what are usually called cosmology, epistemology, and value orientation in western philosophy, are distinctively illustrated as cosmology of dependent origination, epistemology of ignorant *prajñā*, or transcending regular forms of knowledge and value orientation in enlightened Buddha or nirvana based on the universal Buddha nature. Their scholarship as a system could be briefed as “the Buddhist Three Seals of the Dharma(*san fa yin*)”, i.e. “all activities alienate from their constancy(*zhu xing wu chang*)” can be referred to the cosmology of dependent origination, “all phenomena alienate from their self-entities(*zhu fa wu wo*)” the epistemology of ignorant *prajñā* and “nirvana is attained by mental peace(*nie pan ji jing*)” the value orientation of self-enlightenment.

Generally, Indian Buddhism had its philosophical notions expressed in these three dimensions: the world(*jing*), i.e., the object constituting the world the Buddhists observe or reflect on, including their reflections on the objective world and knowledge, the intuitional experience(*xing*), i.e., the religious self-cultivation

for certain beliefs, including the deeper intuitional awareness of the practitioners, the religious attainment(*guo*), i.e., the actual achievement or intuitional attainment in practitioners' experience. These interrelated dimensions disclose the Buddhist system in its cosmology, epistemology, and value orientation, complementary in both theory and practice. If their dimensions were emphasized in theory, we could easily sense their philosophical sophistication; if their dimensions were underlined in practice, we could be convincing of their religious mysteries. Therefore, when Chinese scholars were the first to welcome Indian Buddhism, they carefully marked these nuances out as either Buddhist scholarship(*foxue*) for its philosophical aspect or Buddhist religion(*fojiao*) for its religious aspect. Therefore, we are safe to state that Buddhism is both philosophy and religion, much similar to, but dialectically complementary, what modern Chinese Buddhist scholar Ouyang Jingwu stated: "Buddhist Dharma is neither philosophy nor religion." Such import lies at that Buddhism is not philosophy if approached only from its religious aspect, and vice versa. Clearly, Buddhism in these contexts may apply its comprehension in what western people describe "a glass of half level water" in "half-full" or "half-empty", making no difference in its essence though the different descriptions manipulated by optimistic or pessimistic mentality.

Buddhist Cosmology

As is commonly discussed, the Buddhist world view or its cosmology is based on a systematic theory of Dependent Origination(*yuanqi*) and Empty Identity(*xingkong*), mainly advocated by Mādhyamika(*zhongguan xuepai*). Such a sophisticated theory accentuates "dependent origination" as the prototype for all universal beings, its emergence and existence all dependent on other relative conditions. This cosmological narration also insinuates the logical analysis on empty identity, i.e., all universal beings are transient without self-entity and will lose its existence when its dependent conditions disappear. The unity between dependent origination and empty identity, in essence, provides Buddhism a very special type of cosmology with a peculiar philosophical analysis, expounding the growth and ruin of all universal beings on other conducive or destructive conditions than their own entity and sovereignty. The philosophical subjectivity and reflective transcendence disclosed in Buddhist cosmology distinguished itself remarkably from Christian type of cosmology which consigns its creation, preservation, destruction, or salvation all to the whim of God as the Wholly Other. In consequence, the cosmology of Christian tradition exposed itself to an unusual type of Buddhism in that an independent manipulator governing the universal subjective beings, humbly surrendering their originality and creativity to an objective God as Creator, Law-Giver, and Doomsday Judge, or if being aware of dependent origination like Buddhism highlighting their creative involvement, they are liable to evil abuse like "hubris".

Yet the philosophy in Buddhist cosmology proves to be quite another type from that of the Christian one. According to the theory of Dependent Origination and

Empty Identity, the universe of all beings including the subjective world of human beings is depicted as a phenomenal world of constant changes and fantastic uncertainties, what is termed as “this existence is dependent on that one, this nonexistence leads to the same state of that one; this origination brings about that one, this destruction gives rise to another similar one.”¹ Such ambiguous illustrations for interrelated cosmological constraints are designed here to pave the way smoothly for the value orientation of Buddhist teleology, i.e., the addicted pursuit of secular wealth and fame could be strategically stupid since the world favoring all sorts of vainglory does not exist for its own identity and subject to a quick diminution. Thus, we see how Buddhist cosmology falls a victim to its own logic of dependent origination, being at the disposal of Buddhist teleology and an ideological puppet to the intuitional enlightenment realized as nirvana. The most flagrant folly in Buddhism is the “ignorance(*wu ming*)”, identical to the Christian “hubris” in this context. Since “ignorance” is believed to be the first of all the “twelve principal and subsidiary causes(*shi er yinyuan*)”, the whole process of self-enlightenment in Buddhist teleology should start right away from diminishing “ignorance”, to attain to the state of being clear in mentality or the sphere of enlightenment in the realization of unified cosmology and teleology.

Superficially, Buddhist cosmology appears to be the dialectical analysis of pure logic, deprived of any mundane experience, especially lack of sexual experience in genital reproduction popularly seen in other types of ancient culture or primitive faith. If it were so, it should have been too transcendent to be connected with any secular experience, with cosmology in particularly devoid of genital reproduction. But the truth in essential is that the Buddhist theory of cosmology in the form of Dependent Origination and Empty Identity still has reliable associations with genital reproduction, assuming male and female genital organs to be the principal and subsidiary causes in human life reproduction. When these principal and subsidiary causes were introduced into China, they coincided with the Chinese traditional concepts of female *yin* and male *yang* in a universal evolution producing inexhaustible sorts of life. In the Chinese Confucian tradition, there must be some basic and principal conditions for universal beings to be produced and exist, being the case that “Heaven represents the male principle of the universe while Earth the female one. Thus, Heaven initiates the process of universe, the coordinated movement from the Earth gives birth to everything.” In this cosmological structure, both heaven and earth, *yin* and *yang*, male and female are just symbolic systems in generalizing that “the heaven symbolizes the male while the earth the female; the heaven thus initiates and the earth accomplishes all natural beings.”² Here, we can see much similarity in the cosmological process from human genital reproduction. Yet, in traditional Indian Buddhism, there were distinctive influences concerning various human genital reproductions from Hindu Classic Rgveda, which worshipped human primitive genital reproduction more than logical

¹ Chapter, 47, Madhyamāgama.

² Xi Ci Xia, *The Book of Changes*(*zhouyi, xici xia*).

inference in the phrase of “everything from nothing (*wuzhongshengyou*)” in its hymn to God: “The Indian primitive people came to realize that sexual intercourse could result in baby births, so they intuitively associated cosmology with intercourse. There were lines in the hymn Rgveda either distinctively or ambiguously hinting at human sexual intercourse, like being wet and liquid, being hot, being lascivious, being seeds or sperm, being positioned with upper male and down female, being golden pregnant, being tidewater wet, etc.”³ This association between human genital reproduction and cosmology was later exhibited in Buddhist structure, which was also largely neglected since Buddhism was gradually advocated as prematurely intricate philosophy. But the German philosopher G. W. F. Hegel was penetrating in noticing that “The genre in India of worshipping reproductive power by way of genital organs was expressive in their religious architecture such as pagodas with thicker base and thinner top. In its origin these towers or religious buildings served their independent purpose as pure worshipping objects before they were rebuilt with recess rooms to position Buddhist Gods, similar to the portable niche of the Greeks to communicate with their gods. These Indian Buddhist towers with hollowed insides and in the form of human genital organs gradually acquired the form of a pagoda with kernel building, extended walls, and roofed levels.”⁴ These observations on genital organs, their roles, and outcomes may also serve as the secular experience of human reproduction based on which the primitive Buddhists comprehended and illustrated their views on cosmology. Thus, it may be safe to state that the theory of dependent origination and empty identity had their primary justifications on observation and analysis toward human life experience rather than a pure concocted logical system. Therefore, Buddhist cosmology differs from that of the Christian one in creating a universe by God’s Words, but rather focuses on human life experience in inferring the creation, preservation, and ruin of universal beings, underlining the subjectivity of affiliates in self-enlightenment and human wisdom. Naturally, Buddhist advocacy on intuitional transcendence in nirvana targets its acceptability for believers in their human reproduction and its transformation into a sophisticated faith system would also be attentive to its epistemology of Buddhist style, cogently connected with its own cosmology.

Buddhist Epistemology

Indian Buddhism accentuates the correlation between cosmology and the subjectivity in believers’ value orientation on one hand while highlighting the possible conditions facilitating subjective belief holders in realizing their life goals. Under

³ Ji Xianlin, *Buddhism and the Cultural Communication between China and India* (Nanchang, Jiangxi People’s Press, 1990), p. 242.

⁴ Cited from Ji Xianlin, *Buddhism and the Cultural Communication between China and India* (Nanchang, Jiangxi People’s Press, 1990), p. 238.

this context Buddhist epistemology is enunciated as Prajnā or the Buddhist wisdom required for becoming an enlightened Buddha in any practitioner, opposed to Buddhist ignorance(*wu ming*). Although Buddhist epistemology has its precondition in cosmology as an ideological frame to infer the beauty of epistemology, its emphasis in intuitional wisdom reveals the Buddhist intent on dissolution of empirical creation from its cosmology, achieving the purity of cosmological ontology rather than cosmology in the empirical process of creation. This Buddhist epistemology in terms of Prajnā or intuitive wisdom may qualify Buddhist believers in apprehending the empty identity of all universal beings including human beings with their social status. The sense of empty identity may well liberate Buddhist believers from all aspirations, worries, and frustrations about all social and physical possessions of high positions, money, long life, and reputations, and if they were actually free from all these social and biological attractions, they could have attained what Buddhist termed the sphere of self-identity(*zi zai*), parallel to the cosmos as the grand sphere of self-identity(*da zi zai*) or the cosmic liberty(*zi you zi zai*). In consequence, Buddhist epistemology constitutes the necessary precondition for its value orientation, the safeguard for individual enlightenment and the intermediate link between dependent origination in cosmology and value orientation in nirvana in the Buddhist system.

In the Indian Buddhist tradition, such intuitive wisdom in Prajnā was much favored and intensely advocated, especially with Mādhyamika. For those Buddhist thinkers, human beings were accustomed to narrow-minded sort of knowledge, the empirical and substantial know-how, but such sort of knowledge could scarcely be constructive to apprehend the cosmological essence, leaving much room desired for a sound theory in legitimatizing its value orientation. Its intellectual disadvantage lies in that any empirical knowledge cannot but be confined to various sorts of secular restrictions, distracting human beings from their efforts in attaining purity of value orientation. Thus, to secure the human pursuit of self-enlightenment by agency of Prajnā, it is necessary for Buddhist believers to upgrade their secular, empirical, and partial knowledge to sacred, transcendental, and comprehensive wisdom, and this intellectual “upgrade” means to furnish human beings with different types of knowledge transcending all their previous ones, uniting knowledge and ignorance into the master-key knowledge, termed Prajnā wisdom. The distinction introduced from Indian Buddhist epistemology was later illustrated by a Chinese master monk Seng Zhao in two propositions, i.e., the “unexpressed by language and explanation(*yan quan bu ji*)” and “unachievable by intellectual inference(*yi lu bu dao*)”. In his logic, Prajnā wisdom represents the all-embracing knowledge above any specified sorts of knowledge, i.e., the knowledge acquired through negating all specific knowledge and this super-knowledge is the indication of what Buddhists depicted as “the transformation from knowledge to wisdom(*zhuan shi cheng zhi*).”

The proposition of “the transforming from knowledge to wisdom” is feasibly demonstrated in Buddhist logic that the Buddhist seal in “All activities alienate from their constancy” could tell all universal beings are empty in their essential identities, this “empty” of self-identity can be further inferred as “alienation of

self-entity(*wu wo*)”, which contains the alienated negations to both sentient human beings and insentient beings, being distinctive in that insentient beings without constancy and sentient beings without slim chance to free from the oceans of misfortune. These negations to both human and other universal beings in their entities have advanced the knowledge on both the objective and subjective worlds to its utmost, arriving at the expectation on Prajnā in reducing all knowledge to its minimum in conforming with negating all casual conditions for Buddhist cosmology. In other words, what knowledge we human beings could obtain in its maximum volume is Prajnā wisdom, for it is resulted in the proposition “all phenomena alienate from their self-entities” transcendent to all possible empirical knowledge. So the proposition “all phenomena alienate from their self-entities” is prone to the conclusion of “Prajnā without Knowledge(*boruo wuzhi*)”, and to reach this conclusion is what Buddhist “transformation from knowledge to wisdom”. In essence, the ignorance in the form of Prajnā without Knowledge does not suggest “knowledge about nothing”, but rather “knowledge above everything”, being metaphysical knowledge superior to all physical knowledge. The superficial negation to all physical knowledge aims at achieving metaphysical knowledge to comply with the sense of wisdom. Such epistemological clue resembles itself to our daily observation on animals: David’s deer(*sibuxiang*), not similar to deer, horse, mules and bulls but bearing one feature of these four animals, and similarly we have Prajnā without Knowledge more comprehensive and abstract than David’s deer, it could be the Negative Animal(*wanbuxiang*), the negative symbolizing ten-thousand attributes on one animal which stands for infinite attributes to one master animal like God Animal that creates all animals. In the Chinese Daoist tradition, the epistemological observation on universal phenomena is termed as “master image without images(*daxiang wuxiang*)”, and Seng Zhao explained the Buddhist epistemological clue as “Prajnā without Knowledge” in crediting his fame of “No.1 Master Scholar on Prajnā(*jiekong diyi*)”.

Nevertheless, Prajnā Wisdom or Prajnā without Knowledge is nothing identical to the epistemology based on pure logical reference in the west, it serves only as a mediator or bridge between cosmology and teleology in the Buddhist system. Such wisdom is acquired with the assistance of the empty identity theory in Buddhist cosmology, making it possible for a peculiar sort of super-knowledge or Prajnā both originating and transcending any empirical existence in human society. By Buddhist epistemology in terms of Prajnā, we come to realize that there might be two kinds of object in any knowledge system: one being the “knowable knowledge” associated with our daily experience for yes or no, and another being the “unknowable super-knowledge” transcending our daily experience beyond yes or no. These objects in Buddhist epistemology bears much similarity to Confucian terms of Dao and Qi in “What is metaphysical is what Dao means, what is physical is what instrument(Qi) means,”⁵ and the same logic is also employed by Chinese Daoists in “To work on learning is to increase day by day, to work on Dao is to

⁵ Xi Ci Shang, *The Book of Changes* (*zhouyi, xici shang*).

decrease day by day, being decreased to nothing before Dao can be attained.”⁶ Either in Confucian Dao or Daoist Dao we could sense the epistemological entity in Buddhist Prajnā without Knowledge. With both Confucian and Daoist enunciations on their epistemological entity, we are able to appreciate the metaphysical beauty exhibited in Buddhist Prajnā epistemology, highlighting its first entity Tathagata(*rulai*) in a ten-entities system, tatha (“such”) being the metaphysical entity distinctive to all the previous nine entities of coming and going in physical senses. As Buddha himself spotlighted tatha suchness as the quality of diamond distinctive to all other hardness of stones, “Whoever addicted to phenomenon is trapped by illusions. He who sees through all phenomena can arrive at Tathata or epistemological suchness.”⁷ For him hard stones could only be illusions to trap our first impressions where diamond can be carelessly missed, much likely happening to his insinuated wisdom beyond words in “If approaching me by means of phenomena or voice, it will be the worst way to just miss Tathata the suchness.”⁸ Therefore, his frequently admonished Prajnā wisdom must employ all means to negate whatever human beings have been gaining as empirical knowledge from the phenomenal world.

Value Orientation or Life Philosophy

The value orientation or life philosophy in Indian Buddhism was originally expressed in the form of Caturāryasatya(*si sheng di*) based on the coherence in both the cosmology of dependent origination and the epistemology of Prajnā wisdom. The so-called Caturāryasatya claimed to have discussed four truths concerning human teleology in expounding the phenomena in miserable human lives and their origins, and the correct ways to salvage human beings from these oceans of misfortune and the desirable sphere of mental liberation respectively. In Buddhist terminology, Duhkhasatya(*ku di*) stands for the secular world where human beings are bitterly suffering all kinds of troubles. Samudyasatya(*ji di*) exemplifies the origins and causes leading to all these secular troubles, mainly the Karma. Nirodhasatya(*mie di*) speaks of ending all these secular troubles and the ultimate goal for religious cultivation. Mārgasatya(*dao di*) represents the doctrines and paths to the ultimate goal or mental liberation. Among these four truths, Nirodhasatya enjoys the top priority, parallel to Christian eschatology with self-enlightenment stressed.

⁶ Chapter, 48, *The Works of Lao Zi*(*daodejing*).

⁷ Weng Xu and Ming Kong, *Chinese Interpretation to Diamond Sutra* (*jingangjing jinyi*) (Beijing: China Social Science Press, 1994),p. 20.

⁸ Weng Xu and Ming Kong, *Chinese Interpretation to Diamond Sutra* (*jingangjing jinyi*) (Beijing: China SocialScience Press, 1994),p. 31.

To traditional Buddhists, human secular life not only suffers from birth, getting old, disease, death, and illusory self-entity, but also from spiritual feebleness, absurdity, distress, frustration, and a million other miseries like the edgeless oceans of misfortune. All these issues concerning biological, social, and spiritual dimensions of human life are what Buddhists believe to be the phenomena and facts inflicting painfully on humans, being imperative for human beings to deal with. Nevertheless, the origins and roots of this infinitude of misfortune must be clearly explained to Buddhist practitioners before they can liberate themselves from all these inflicting pains, resulting in a unified consideration of cosmology and epistemology. By our daily experience or common sense, all the inflicting pains or sufferings generalized by Indian Buddhists were their observations and reflections upon the uncertainties of universal beings in their constant course of evolution and more convincingly upon their physical experience in awful Hindu Caste as well as austere tropical conditions. For all these miseries, the Hindu Brahman believed to be the fortunes blessed, like convictions in Brahma creator, Vishnu preserver and Śiva destroyer. Therefore the only way to salvage human beings in these oceans of misfortune was to worship these gods, offering sacrifice to please them and tendering obedience to their blessed schemes.

Quite alienated from these convictions and in response to their destined misfortunes, Indian Buddhists contributed a more philosophical clue to all these infinite sufferings in a more unified cosmological theory, approaching the same situation from two dimensions: first, logical inference in that all universal beings including human life are conditioned to the cause and effect paradigm, Karma and its corresponding rebirth; second, generalized uncertainty in a constant-changing world in that moving and changing world including human society is invariably subject to birth, growth, alienation, and ruin torturing human beings in their aspiration for stability, certainty, and durability. These two dimensions have helped establish the causes for all human misfortunes as their logical effects rather than destined by those Hindu gods, alluding to the dependent origination theory in Buddhist cosmology in which the affiliate's subjectivity was prioritized than holy absolute objectivity and the room and chance for affiliate's enlightenment and meditation wisdom were thus readily open. Even for the sufferings and misfortunes in the caste system which were natural miseries, Buddhists relied on their religiously committed awareness otherwise termed self-enlightenment in apprehending the causes and origins; such apprehension could then satisfactorily help practitioners get rid of all these inflicting misfortunes and sufferings being as numerous as the sand drops on the Ganges. To Buddhists, misfortunes and sufferings are not destined by Gods, but the invited troubles by human beings in their previous Karma, indirectly laying responsibilities on their own shoulders. These original Karmas are evils obstructing human beings in their correct ways of fulfilling epistemological guidance, being epitomized as "three poisons(*san du*)", i.e., being greedy(*tan*), emotional(*chen*) and foolish(*chi*) and "six thieves(*liu zei*)", i.e., the six perceptual organs of eyes for colors, ears for sound, nose for smell, tongue for taste, body for temperature, and mind for illusion, and the "three poisons" might seduce the "six thieves" in contracting "eighty-four thousand

harassment.” At the suggestion of the cosmology of dependent origination and the epistemology of Prajnā, Buddhists believe that their value orientation or life philosophy could be appropriately achieved by becoming a self-enlightened Buddha. According to the dependent origination, secular harassment would arise at the spot of any universal being as “foolish engagement(*zhimi buwu*)”. Therefore, there are always possible cases for human beings to contract “eighty-four thousand harassment” living in “a myriad world(*daqian shijie*)”. If human beings are likely to be engaged foolishly with 84,000 harassment, there would be equally numbered enlightenments to help them transfer from foolish engagement to enlightened Buddha, above which there must be super enlightenment to guide all concrete enlightenments, the self-enlightened Buddha at individual practitioner’s heart, which is called the “Only Gate to Buddha(*bu er famen*)”, the spiritual guarantee to cut off all secular harassment in the confrontations between wisdom and folly, enlightenment and foolish engagement and the sacred and the secular. Concerning the way for human beings to salvage from the oceans of misfortune, Buddhists advocate the validity and conviction in its teleology in line with its peculiar cosmology of dependent origination and epistemology of Prajnā wisdom, as being articulated by Chinese Chan Buddhist monks: “Kalyana Mitra, My advocated gate to become a self-Buddha is established by having acquired eighty-four thousand wits. How could it be? To consider that there are eighty-four thousand harassment accompanying the same amount of secular issues, but if there were no such secular issues, Prajnā would remain its own entity. If we can approach Prajnā this way, we could rest with Tathata without being addicted to opinions, memories, aspiration and self-arrogance. With Prajnā at heart, we could become self-enlightened Buddha free from any secular engagement.”⁹ Obviously, the value orientation explained in the Chinese Chan Buddhist context has consolidated itself on self-enlightenment of subjectivity, a creative transformation realized in Chinese Confucian and Daoist emphasis on heart-nature conscience and nature-modeling pursuit, a further improvement to the already updated version of Buddhism by Mahayana to the primitive and sectarian Buddhism. Theoretically, there has been disagreement between the empty identity in Buddhist cosmology and the self-conscience of Buddhist teleological enlightenment, the former being attributive of “empty” and the latter being attributive of “self-conscience”. But this intellectual confrontation can be largely alleviated from Prajnā, reconciling physical emptiness with metaphysical entity of self-conscience or enlightenment.

The Buddhist teleology featured by Prajnā would often discuss two opposite situations: the salvation advocated by Theravada Buddhism and the universal compassion by Mahayana Buddhism. For Theravada Buddhists all phenomenal existence were intellectual illusions and substantially boundless misfortunes, what they strive for was their own escape from the oceans of misfortune and their own attained Nirvana the Arahant(*a luo han*). This attainment, to Mahayana Buddhists

⁹ Quoted from *Platform Scripture of the Sixth Patriarch (liuzu tangjing)* (Dunhuang Version), edited and annotated by Guo Peng(Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 1983),p. 53.

would mean meager salvation, or derogatory small vehicle to ferry the miserable self across the oceans of misfortune. What Mahayana Buddhists were trying to advocate was the Prajnā Bodhisattva (*pusa xinchang*). They were clear that they could become Buddha themselves if they managed to rid themselves of all social defilements, but they purposely remain in this world full of defilements and evils to help all the miserable beings out of these troubles, being meritoriously termed as the greater vehicle to ferry all sentient beings across the oceans of misfortune. This altruist compassion of Mahayana Buddhism does not always line Buddhism with “other-worldly” philosophy, it certainly merits the praise of “this-worldly” ethic of other schools of thought while proposing Bodhisattva as its own distinctive value orientation open to all sentient beings regardless of their knowledge degree, caste, physical, and social attributes. Therefore, in Mahayana Buddhism I would particularly mark its Prajnā Bodhisattva out as a brand new type of religious salvation other than traditional nirvana salvation. This breakthrough in value orientation in Indian Buddhist tradition was extraordinarily appealing to Chinese affiliates as they read in *Mahaprajnaparamita Sutra (da bo ruo jing)*: “Bodhisattva is pleased with life and death, not with Nirvana itself.” “Prajnā cannot be revealed in fear of life and death, neither does it satisfy in attaining Nirvana. The sublime truth of Tathagata comes from nowhere but benefiting all sentient beings in their salvation.”¹⁰ I would also praise this shift from individual nirvana to massive nirvana in Bodhisattva as ideological revolution, a fearless life philosophy (*da wu wei*) realized in “salvation braving life and death” rather than traditional value orientation afflicted by “salvation in fear of degenerating cycle of rebirth”. Consequently, such creative transformation in value orientation by Mahayana Buddhists has benefited a great deal in boundless transcendence suggested by epistemological Prajnā. To be more detailed, the Prajnā transcendence is realized in deconstructing “subjective addiction (*ren wo zhi*)” and “objective addiction (*fa wo zhi*)”. The life philosophy in Mahayana Buddhism, to my comprehension, must be free from intellectual engagements purely with subjective exploring into the objective phenomenal world before it can penetrate into the universal entity without physical doctrines, human intelligence of any sort. Only this universal freedom can match Bodhisattva in a universal compassion or great mercy and compassion (*da cibe*), unifying it with a universal fearlessness (*da wu wei*).

The universal fearlessness as much anticipated value orientation in Mahayana Buddhism gradually worked its way into late Indian Buddhism and Chinese Buddhism as a trendy doctrine. Chinese Buddhist affiliates would be more readily convinced that Bodhisattva was a better nirvana for all sentient beings, congenially agreeable with Chinese integration between heaven and human in life philosophy rather than Arahant Nirvana in Theravada Buddhism. Chinese Buddhist affiliates have their universal entity in an intuitional heart which could house a boundless cosmos. There is a Chinese saying, “If you have a big heart, then the heaven and earth become small, vice versa.” And if one’s heart were big enough to house the

¹⁰ Vol. 572, *Mahaprajnaparamita Sutra*.

world, he promptly attained a “fearless heart” as to free himself from worries of degenerating cycle of rebirth, thus echoing Buddhist life philosophy in “a universal fearlessness”. Therefore, Chinese Buddhists have always been happy with this statement: “When Bodhisattva behaves in the spirit of *Mahaprajnaparamita Sutra*, he can remain steadfast against all illusory phenomena. If not distressed by all those false impressions and hallucinations, his heart fears no surprise, no worries and no horrors, thus attaining its Prajnā entity.”¹¹ This sphere of mentality based on both Chinese Confucian heart and Mahayana Buddhist universal compassion was therefore much admired and sought after among Chinese Buddhist affiliates in their courageous declaration to salvage all suffering beings across the oceans of misfortune, chanting from their hearts: “I will challenge none other than myself to brave the hell(*wo bu xia diyu,shui xia diyu*)!”

Some Comments

When observing the great traditions for different civilizations, we could invariably find universal discretion in their distinctive value orientations, i.e., agape in Christianity, humaneness(*ren*) in Confucianism, and the great mercy and compassion(*da cibe*) in Buddhism. Being different in expressions they bear something significant in common, to be justified in their value orientation by a well-constructed cosmology and coherent methodology. This is why all civilized traditions have connected triad between cosmology, epistemology, and value orientation in complementing each other in a theoretical system. In Christianity, the Genesis told the story that God, in his Word or by his words to express his wishes, created the universe in 6 days and this cosmology exactly suggests that in his image God created human beings and the latter’s value orientation would coincide God his fraternity, for we can never interpret the ethical sense of God’s creation as hatred, non-fraternity, or value-free orientation, otherwise it would be nonsense for holy creation. What does “revelation” mean ultimately in Christian tradition? I just take it accountable for religious faith in God by purging cosmology and value orientation of epistemology, to be aware of this: “Then the Lord God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and guard it. He said to him, ‘You may eat the fruit of any tree in the garden, except the tree that gives knowledge of what is good and, what is bad. You must not eat the fruit of that tree; if you do, you will die the same day’.”¹² How could human beings be destined to die simply by taking fruit from the knowledge tree? This might be a metaphorical question to epistemology, i.e., epistemology would not be logically isolated from value orientation, instead it appropriately verifies its importance in convincing human believers for a specific type of life philosophy, or to validate Christian eschatology in this case. By Buddhist self-

¹¹ Vol. 36, *Mahaprajnaparamita Sutra*.

¹² Genesis, *The Old Testament*(2:15).

enlightenment, the death threat to human aspiration for knowledge would come to no desired effect. There is an intellectual dilemma in the Christian faith system: The introduction of intellectual prohibition into Christian cosmology would weaken the base for Christian believers to worship God since his creative miracle has no convincing connections with their empirical intimacy. Spiritual doubt would naturally arise among believers as alienation is destined by lack of personal experience, and in consequence the faith edifice for any believer would crumble of its own accord. Thus, in the very beginning, Buddhists did not isolate their eschatology from its epistemology; they intentionally introduced Prajnā as the prerequisite to Nirvana instead of banning knowledge by threat of death in Christian tradition. This dilemma promptly paved the way for western philosophy to challenge Christianity: If God created the world, who created God? If there were no creator for God, how could we demonstrate and believe in him? But if we take God as the self-evident creator, all the previous cosmological challenges would be logically avoided. Thus the epistemological turn in western philosophy has been paralleling if not overtaking Christian tradition as an intellectual gem for western civilization, thus indirectly fortifying Buddhism as a special sort of philosophy to compensate the spiritual confrontation between western religion and philosophy.

A similar clue also reminds me of Confucian tradition in China that Chinese cosmology has been accompanying the ethical doctrine of “humaneness(*ren ai*)” instead of epistemological challenge to Christian cosmology in the west. The connection between cosmology and ethics would reveal more religious commitment to make itself distinctive to the association between Prajnā(Buddhist epistemology) and Nirvana(Buddhist value orientation) in Buddhism this Confucian tradition was explained by Sima Qian in “Heaven is the beginning of Man, while father and mother are the source of human life.”¹³ Therefore, the worship of heaven and ancestor originated from the religious commitment rather than its cosmological and epistemological sense. With the Confucian proposition that “the grand virtue in the universe is revealed in its evolution”, heaven, father and mother in life reproduction would ethically imply what Confucian scholar described as “the memorial for the dead and religious sacrifice for ancestors have always been intended for social virtues!”¹⁴ Social virtues here meant the motivation and aim for Confucian value orientation. Therefore, in the Confucian scheme of integration between heaven and human, heaven symbolizes ethical cosmology while human cosmological ethics, both complementarily sustaining each other’s implications. When Confucian ethics was explained in the cosmological context from family, community, society, country, and the world under heaven, it tried to convey the sense of interdependent harmony instead of “the absolute otherness” and its “poor creatures” in Christian tradition or the confrontation between “the subjective” and

¹³ Sima Qian, *Historical Records (shiji)*, “Biographies of Qu Yuan and Jia Sheng” in *The Twenty-Four Histories*, (Version of Simplified Chinese) (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 2000) Vol. 84, p. 1933.

¹⁴ Xue Er, *The Analects of Confucius (lunyu, xue er)*.

“the objective” in western philosophy. The unified relation between Confucian cosmology and ethics would infer from the relation between heaven and human, or between parents and children, the ethical facets of bloody intimacy and the universal love for all universal beings, as stated by the Confucian scholar Zhang Zai: “Heaven is designated as father while earth mother. Born between them I am such a miniature as to be noticed. The air which substantiates between heaven and earth constitutes my body; the universal nature between heaven and earth embodies my personality. Thus all human beings are of the same blood and flesh, and all natural beings of the equal capacity and entity.”¹⁵ The unity between human and other universal beings thus represents the correlation between Confucian cosmology and teleology, besides which its epistemology is not so obviously logical despite its being touched upon from “the grand virtue in life reproduction” or from the human birth and care gratitude. Though not strictly forbidden as in Christian tradition, Confucian epistemology lacks independent and self-evident logic compared with Buddhist Prajnā. I therefore credit the ideological recession of Confucianism with its weak form of epistemology in the period when Buddhism was introduced into China with its Prajnā charms to Chinese intellectuals.

As Buddhist epistemology or Prajnā, it always verifies its independent and sophisticated entity even in the coincidence with its cosmology and teleology. Contrasted with the cosmology of Greek philosophy or Christian tradition, its cosmology appears to be weak and insubstantial in the nature of empty identity. In a theoretical frame of dependent origination(*yuan qi*), inconsistency(*wu chang*) and empty identity(*xing kong*), Buddhist cosmology has been transformed into ontology by its Prajnā, from “have(*you*)”, the physical beings to “have not(*wu*)”, the empty identity, and finally echoing itself in Prajnā wisdom or Prajnā without knowledge, to think of Buddhist principle of transforming knowledge into wisdom. Why the Prajnā wisdom can be identical to Prajnā without knowledge, the reason lies exactly at its metaphysical sense insinuated at by its sophisticated epistemology, suggested by which “empty identity” can justify all phenomenally sensible beings. Again this Buddhist “empty identity” can minimize all sensible desires to their utmost as to selflessness, and then the moral selflessness identifies itself logically and morally with cosmological empty identity, realizing at this point the Great Mercy and Compassion for all sentient beings. The Buddhist teleology in the form of the Great Mercy and Compassion was a silent revolution in Indian Buddhist tradition which had been largely neglected by Indian Buddhists but much extolled among Chinese Buddhists, as they prioritized the Prajnā Bodhisattva(*pusa xinchang*) to Arahat Nirvana(*a luo han guo*) or a Buddhist egoists(*zi liao han*). Morally encouraged by the Confucian scheme of integration between heaven and human, Chinese Buddhists did not accept Indian Buddhism solely for its Prajnā wisdom but for its ethic-oriented nirvana in Bodhisattva and the Great Mercy and Compassion. This acceptance and Confucian genre of ethics

¹⁵ Zhang Zai, “Divine Evolution, Cosmological Enlightenment(*zhengmeng, qiancheng*)”, in *The Works of Zhang Zai* (*zhangzai ji*)(Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 1978),p. 62.

amusingly highlighted Buddhism not only in its religious commitment but mainly in its epistemological teleology, i.e., the integration between Prajnā wisdom and the Great Mercy and Compassion. This is why the main body of Buddhism in China is the Mahayana sect while leaving Theravada only in Chinese Southern Areas of ethnic people and Tantra Buddhism in Chinese Tibetan Areas. For both Theravada and Tantra we may largely tell their religious attributes, but for Mahayana Buddhism in main areas of Chinese Han residents we may see clearly its moral philosophy or philosophical teleology complemented by Confucianism in its hear–nature theory.

Chapter 15

Chinese Cosmopolitanism (*tianxia*)

Introduction

The transformation of Chinese cosmopolitanism (*tianxia*) from the meaning of geographic space in the time of the “Five Emperors (*wudi*) and the Three Dynasties (*sandai*)” to the universal ethics based on humaneness (*ren*) in the time of the Qin and Han Dynasties witnessed a critical change in the making of the Chinese people. The importance of Chinese cosmopolitanism is seen in its preservation of the basic Chinese territory and Chinese people’s integrity. Chinese cosmopolitanism also gives rise to ethical liberalism of Chinese style, hence, making Chinese people sustained in their social lives and cultivated in their individual improvement. Chinese cosmopolitanism not only reflects the space and ethical experiences of Chinese people originated in their “Families (*jia*)” at the stage of the patriarchal society but also symbolizes the Chinese people in their acknowledging the “geographic world” and accepting the universal value during their more than 2,000 years’ development. In the age of globalization we could aim at the mutual communication and benefit between “humaneness and rite (*ren li*)” exhibited in Chinese cosmopolitanism and universal human rights exhibited in world pacifism.

The concept of cosmopolitanism (*tianxiaguan*) is important in the historical experiences and intelligent spheres of the Chinese people, guiding theoretically the Chinese people in their unification in diversity and stimulating spiritually the Chinese people in their individual cultivation. Chinese cosmopolitanism testifies that the tradition of any culture may positively meet any challenge posed at any time provided its merits are fully tapped out.

Evolution of Chinese Cosmopolitanism

Chinese cosmopolitanism is related to the legendary “Five Emperors (*wudi*)” and the historical experiences in the “Three Dynasties (*sandai*)” confirmed by archeological artifacts as well as literary documents, including spatial experiences

gathered by constant migration of ancient Chinese people and the ideal explanations to spatial experiences gradually acquired.

In “The Records of the Five Emperors (*wudi benji*)” and “The Records of the Xia Dynasty (*xia benji*)”, two chapters in the “*The Historical Records (shiji)*” by Sima Qian, the original spatial meaning in Chinese cosmopolitanism is expressed. The Five Emperors were then the “universal common masters” (*tianxia gongzhu*) among tribal unions or dukedoms in central China. In their imagination, the geographic space under the influence of ancient Chinese was a world under the heaven, being “all corners shone with sun and moon” as well as “all boundaries struck with wind and rain”. In fact, this geographic space conceptualized by the ancient Chinese was the areas where the “universal common master” went hunting and touring as well as applied his managerial culture. Emperor Shun, the last of the Five Emperors, divided cosmopolitan space (*tianxia*) or a world under the heaven into 12 provinces. In the Xia Dynasty, cosmopolitan space was again divided into nine provinces and tributary services of five classes. These were the knowledge of the ancient Chinese concerning themselves with spatial experiences. In the successive Shang Dynasty after the Xia Dynasty, the ancient Chinese made *Yin* (now Anyang, Henan Province) their new capital after constant migration, deeming that it was the center of a world under heaven with four remote areas in the north, south, east, and west where tribal unions resided defending their universal common master in central China. These tribal unions maintained different tributary relations with the Shang government according to their distances from the Shang capital. The cosmopolitan space at this time was the geographic union of the Shang capital and its border tribes in four directions. When the Zhou Dynasty replaced Shang, more new geographic experiences were added to Chinese cosmopolitan space. In “High-quality Material (*zicai*)” (seen in *The Book of History (shujing or shangshu), Book of Zhou*), we have the saying “God has bestowed Zhou ancestors with Chinese people and territory.” Also, in *The Book of Poetry (shijing)*, China has been frequently referred. Here, “Chinese territory” and “China” were employed to signify the Chinese cosmopolitan space comprising both the capital and its remote border areas. Mencius believed in the quotation in *The Book of History* that “God chooses leaders and teachers for civilians so that the sole duty of leaders and teachers is to help God love her civilians. The civilian king, usually thought to be both leader as well as teacher, is responsible for all people, whether guilty or innocent. In a world under heaven, no one dares to trespass his duty to commit crimes.” Here, we see that “a world under the heaven” is actually the geographic space where the governors of each dynasty could exercise its influence. The meaning of Chinese cosmopolitan space or “a world under the heaven” was equally expressed in “A world under the heaven is within the emperor’s territory while all people under the heaven come into the category of emperor’s subjects.”

Through the experiences in the “Five Emperors” and the “Three Dynasties”, the Chinese cosmopolitan space had been defined as the common territory of central China and its remote areas in four directions and the concept of Chinese cosmopolitan space had evolved three aspects: first, it is the concept of natural geography; second, it is the concept of the political control from the central power

to all the known remote areas; third, it is the concept of religious and ethical authority at their earliest stage.

In the Qin Dynasty, the concept of Chinese cosmopolitan space had been again evolved into “Six Directions (*liuhe*)”, that is the directions of above the earth, under the sky, east, west, south, and north. The concreteness of the Chinese cosmopolitan space was seen in “All lands in Six Directions come within emperor’s territory, west being in the great desert, east being in the eastern China Sea, south being in Bei Hu, north being in Da Xia. All the people under the heaven have been tamed as Emperor Qin’s subjects.” (seen in “Records of Emperor Qin” in *The Historical Records*)

The quick collapse of the Qin Dynasty left the chance for the Han Dynasty to rise to power and succeed into the territories of the Qin Dynasty. The territories of both the Qin and Han Dynasties constituted the Chinese cosmopolitan space in its geographic sense and it has remained unchanged through more than 2,000 years.

Although the official Chinese history records are written in the perspective of Chinese cosmopolitan space in which the world under heaven is China or vice versa, yet the Chinese, especially its intellectuals, had not associated China with the practical world geography until the Italian missionary Matteo Ricci introduced *the World Map* into the Chinese Ming Dynasty. In *Foreign Countries in the Records of the Ming Dynasty* we read this message clearly: “Italy is in the center of the Atlantic and has been ignorant to Chinese knowledge. In the period of Emperor Wanli, an Italian named Matteo Ricci came to Chinese capital, bringing with him the map of all countries in the world. Since then we have been certain that there are five continents under heaven, namely Asia in which there are more than a hundred countries with China among them.” This initiated Chinese distinction between traditional Chinese cosmopolitan space and world geography. This knowledge of world geography also stimulated the Chinese in their consciousness of modern nation-state and before this juncture Chinese had had cultural superiority of the Chinese people in central China than the rest of the places under heaven with total ignorance of the rest of the world, either in the sense of geography, political ideology, or national people.

Cosmopolitan Space in the Forms of System

In the classical literature, the Chinese cosmopolitan space is also designated with political and economic significance. The frequently referred example is the system of “Five Kinds of Services (*wufu*)”, which means “Dian Service in five hundred miles: people in the nearest area one hundred miles away from the capital should render their service by handing in all their harvests, people in the area two hundred miles away from the capital by handing in eared millet, people in the area three hundred miles away from the capital by handing in hard-skinned millet, people in the area four hundred miles away from the capital by handing in raw millet and people in the areas five hundred miles away from the capital by handing in refined

millet. Hou Service in five hundred miles away from the extreme of Dian Service: people in the nearest area one hundred miles away from the extreme of Dian Service render their errand service for emperor, people in the area two hundred miles away from the extreme of Dian Service for their dukedom, people in the area three hundred miles away from the extreme of Dian Service for gathering intelligence of danger. Sui Service in five hundred miles away from the extreme of Hou Service: people in the area two hundred miles away from the extreme of Hou Service should apply the politics of their emperors, people in the area three hundred miles away from the extreme of Hou Service should fight to defend their emperor. Yao Service in five hundred miles away from the extreme of Sui Service: people in the area two hundred miles away from the extreme of Sui Service should coexist in peace, people in the area three hundred miles away from the extreme of Sui Service should abide by the rules of duke. Huang Service five hundred miles away from the extreme of Yao Service: people in the area two hundred miles away from the extreme of Yao Service should remain their subordinate relations with the above-mentioned people, people in the area three hundred miles away from the extreme of Yao Service may choose to pay tribute or move away.” (seen in “Tributary System in the Xia Dynasty, *The Books of History (shujing)*”) This was the typical reflection of the Chinese cosmopolitan space in the forms of political and economic system before the Qin Dynasty.

But in the Qin Dynasty, the Chinese cosmopolitan space was transformed into another form of provinces and counties (*junxianzhi*). Li Si, the prime minister of the Qin Dynasty explained it this way: “Far back in the history of Five Emperors China occupied the space with hundreds of kilometers with remote areas of different services. At that time the emperor had no way compelling dukes to pay tributes. Now your majesty Emperor Shi Huang Di killed all rebels and conquered all areas under the heaven. The Chinese cosmopolitan space has therefore been translated into the forms of provinces and counties, and your directives are carried out through all areas. The situation has never occurred in previous history even in the time of the Five Emperors.” (seen in “Records of Emperor Qin” in *The Historical Records*) During the time of the Five Emperors, China already occupied certain geographic space in the areas where the political and economic systems had been established to keep their relations with the rule of the emperor, though the efficiency of this rule decreased with the distances from the capital. In fact, the more powerful the central government personified in emperor is, the larger the geographic space brought under the emperor’s control. Here are two examples: the Chinese cosmopolitan space in the Xia Dynasty was expressed in the five service forms with one service form of 100 miles. Yet, the Chinese cosmopolitan space in the Zhou Dynasty was expressed in nine service forms with one service of 500 miles. The distinction exhibited in the Chinese cosmopolitan space in the Xia and Zhou Dynasties did demonstrate the enlarged sphere of influence from the Xia to the Zhou. In other words, the Zhou Dynasty evolved the Chinese cosmopolitan space to its extreme that in the later years of the Zhou Dynasty each dukedom helped in weakening the declining Zhou Empire. The Zhou empire finally collapsed into warring states which in turn were gradually reunified by Qin Shi Huang in 221 B.C.

The Ethical Contents of the Chinese Cosmopolitan Space

The concept of the Chinese cosmopolitan space before the Qin Dynasty did reflect the experiences of geographic space and political and economic systems at the early stages of the Chinese people. But by the end of the Zhou Dynasty, the last leg of the Chinese feudal societies, ancient Chinese had enlarged her geographic space to her manageable extreme that ushered in a warring states period and left a chance for Qin Shi Huang to reunite a long inter-conflicted China. Yet, the geographic crisis forced the ancient Chinese to invest ethical contents with their geographic experiences in order to establish moral ideals and spiritual authorities.

We may not directly decipher the ethical contents from the classical documents of ancient China. Nevertheless, we may infer them from the way the ancient Chinese thinkers observe the world around them.

In the very beginning, the Chinese cosmopolitan space only represents the geographic experiences embracing both China and her four border areas. The concept of Chinese cosmopolitan space then gradually acquired the meaning of cultural significance, with the superiority of Chinese culture contrasted by the inferiority of Chinese minority culture in her distant four border areas. proprieties (*li*), the extension of humaneness (*ren*) in society, was intentionally chosen to standardize what Chinese people had been united together.

One phrase in *The Book of Poetry* (*shijing*) is highly praised by Chinese thinkers, that is, “Although Zhou was an ancient state, the ordinance which lighted on it was new”. “The old empire” might be the Chinese geographic space and “new ordinance” might attach to more ethical importance of Chinese cultural superiority. The transition from the geographic experiences before Qin to the cultural superiority of humaneness and proprieties of later period of time witnessed the change of the Chinese cosmopolitan space from emperors’ managerial spheres (*jiatianxia*) to the ethical significance imperative to all Chinese people (*gongtianxia*). In a sense of agglomeration, Chinese people committed themselves more to ethical value than geographic experiences at this juncture. They came to appreciate universal ethical value exposed in *Gong Tian Xia* than geographic experiences exposed in *Jia Tian Xia*.

The key points in the Chinese cosmopolitan space before Qin were the geographic experiences where emperors’ influence was clearly felt and the central ideas of the Chinese cosmopolitan space after Qin were the ethical values advocated in most Confucian works. The distinction between *Jia Tian Xia* and *Gong Tian Xia* is the one between geographic experiences and Confucian ethical values. This ethical value of Confucian type can be further expounded in humaneness (*ren*). In *The Great Learning* (*daxue*), one of the most influential Confucian classics, we have this judgment, “If humaneness is advocated by emperor’s family, then the whole country may prosper through the principle of humaneness... Emperor Yao and Shun governed a world under the heaven by the principle of humaneness and all people volunteered to be their subjects.” The concept of Chinese cosmopolitan space could never be extended to universal

humanistic and ethical values or intellectuals superiority unless ancient Chinese thinkers liberated themselves from the confinement set for them by Chinese cosmopolitan space in the forms of geographic experiences, political and economic relations between central government, and tribal unions in distant border areas. Fortunately, Chinese Confucian philosophers generalized the concept of humaneness from ancient Chinese patriarchal societies and made it the norm for people in a world under the heaven. In practical social circumstances, humaneness is also expressed in the form of proprieties (*li*). We may read a lot of statements in classical Confucian works concerning humaneness, yet the most popular exposition for humaneness is “to love all people.” This is a phrase frequently quoted from “Yan Yuan, *the Confucian Analects*”. Other phrases bearing the same meaning are “To subdue one’s-self and turn to propriety (proprieties) is perfect virtue (humaneness). If a man can subdue himself and turn to propriety, everyone under the heaven would praise him as a man of perfect virtue”; “Is virtue indeed far off? I crave for virtue, and Lo! Virtue is at hand”; “The man of perfect virtue is one who, desiring to sustain himself, sustains others, and desiring to develop himself, develops others. To be able to draw from one’s parallel for the treatment of others, which may be called the way to practice virtue”; “Even for the space of a single meal the superior man does not go against virtue. In moments of haste, he cleaves to it. In seasons of danger, he cleaves to it”. In every aspect of human affairs, from individual cultivation to the world order, humaneness should be followed as the supreme principle. In the *The Doctrine of the Mean (zhongyong)* the relations between humaneness and universal ethical value is expounded this way as “to engage in politics is to behave in society, to behave in society is to improve oneself, to improve oneself is to follow the basic principle, to follow the basic principle is to personify humaneness. For humaneness is the very essence of human being and human being could never violate blood ties. So to nurse human feeling for the sake of blood ties is to demonstrate one’s human nature; to demonstrate one’s human nature is to identify oneself with ultimate will of the heaven”. To act with what the heaven has revealed is to accomplish the absolute duty, so that “we love ordinary people, then ordinary people would encourage each other; we invite all kinds of artisan, then they could produce plenty of goods; we pacify people outside of our immediate territory, then people would come afar at our disposal; we subdue all dukes, then people under the heaven would show us their respects in awe.” In this connection we may say the concept of Chinese cosmopolitan space has acquired more abstract meaning of humaneness and humaneness in turn represent more values in universal humanities. Humaneness invariably bears the feature of human soul, so we may say “Human being is the actual example of humaneness”, “Humaneness is the exposition of loving people” and “To act according to human soul is to control a world under the heaven.” Here we may conclude that the transition of Chinese cosmopolitan space from patriarchal geographic experiences to universal ethical values finally help Chinese intellectuals confirm themselves with absolute spiritual authority.

The Importance of Chinese Cosmopolitan Space to the Making of Chinese Nation

In the making of Chinese people, the Five Emperors and the Three Dynasties especially the Spring and Autumn Period, and the Warring States Period saw a historic change before the Qin and Han Dynasties which lasted until modern China met another unprecedented historic change. So, we have thus far met with two historic changes, of which the first we resort our judgment to archeological artifacts as well as ancient legends and the second to abundance of literary documents.

The concept of Chinese cosmopolitan space before the Qin Dynasty was based on the experiences of each emperor in his manageable geographic spheres, so the concept benefited the emperor or ordinary Chinese people in keeping their tributary duties and the family trees of the emperor always remained the center of the Chinese loyalties to the country in the name of *tian xia*. Yet, after the Qin Dynasty, the concept of Chinese cosmopolitan space shifted to the ethical contents of universal idealism which centered on the Confucian doctrine of humaneness. This shift helped the Chinese transfer their loyalties to ethical doctrines appealing to both elites and civilians.

With the authorized support of Han Wu Di or Emperor Wu Di in the Han Dynasty, Confucian ideology commanded the supremacy of national spirit. Again the ethical contents of Chinese cosmopolitan space had been enriched with all what Confucian school advocated as meritorious notions in humaneness (*ren*), righteousness (*yi*), devotion (*zhong*), generousness (*shu*), love (*ai*), respect (*jing*), filial piety (*xiao*), brotherhood (*ti*). These basic principles revealed in ethical contents of Chinese cosmopolitan space guided the Chinese people in emigrating both from the central China to border areas and vice versa, promoting the assimilation of Chinese minorities into the Chinese mainstream at great speed. The universal ethical contents of Chinese cosmopolitan space diluted the conflict between mainstream Chinese and minority Chinese in geographic and ethnic differences and consolidated the economic, cultural, and historical ties between them in the policy of “all people are common in having minds and all minds are common in having reasons”. Since the national union after the Qin and Han Dynasties, China also met with the harsh challenge in the Wei and Jin Dynasties when it was separated into North China under the control of minorities and South China under the control of Chinese Han people. But then the ideology with ethical contents of Chinese cosmopolitan space exercised strong influence to maintain the solid national identity both for minority and Han Chinese people. All Chinese people, either minorities or Han, came back to a unitary nation with Chinese cosmopolitan space as their common ideology in the Sui and Tang Dynasties. It is known to all that the Tang Dynasty is another historical epoch of great prosperity after the Han Dynasty in the making of Chinese nation. The people under the influence of Great Emperor Tang (*tangtaizong*) all made pilgrimage to cheer Great Emperor Tang as His Mighty Emperor under the heaven (*tiankehan*) which showed the zenith of the Powerful Tang Dynasty (*Sheng Tang*) and exemplified

what Chinese cosmopolitan space could in real politics have been. The Powerful Tang Dynasty was followed by another historical chaos of “Five Generations and Ten Kingdoms (*wudai shiguo*)” and China was again thrown into the separation of Southern and Northern regimes. Yet all regimes, no matter whether they were established by minorities or by Chinese Han people, still adhered to the principles rich in the ethical contents of Chinese cosmopolitan space and inherited the traditional cultural and economic systems of previous Chinese powers. They finally came back to the Chinese family of all peoples in the Song Dynasty. After the split of the Song Dynasty, China also saw the historic turmoil in the succeeding dynasties when more minority peoples chose to assimilate into Chinese union of all peoples under the heaven.

In consequence, we may infer that the Qin and Han Dynasties not only established China with unified territory as well as political and economic systems, but also accomplished the transfer from patriarchal experiences in central China to the cultural authority regarding Chinese cosmopolitan space, and thus introduced unified and stable development of Chinese nation. Why could all this happen? “As the Chinese then speculated that China was the world as a whole and equally all under the heaven. Chinese were then thought to be the only humans and the ideal of ‘ruling the world by the principle of humaneness’ then was much the same as we now propose to establish a world government. All territories where human culture was cultivated should be brought under the control of one government and observe a universal principle. The nation was to state what man was to world. This ideal was translated into reality by Chinese people in the Qin Dynasty and *The Doctrine of the Mean* had detailed exposition in ‘Now a world under the heaven has been brought under the control in the principle of all carts with the same route, all writing with the same character system, all behavior with the same virtue, and all peoples with filial piety in all places where human being may reach by means of communication and where nature may donate all its merits.’¹ “Ruling the world by the principle of humaneness” is to realize the universal ethics envisaged in the Chinese cosmopolitan space and carry through this ethical ideal in unifying the whole world under the heaven. And this universal ethics also helped to nurse the cosmopolitanism of Chinese style and promoted Chinese nation in consolidating their wholeness in forms of unity and sovereignty. Therefore we could conclude that the concept of Chinese cosmopolitan space may also enrich Chinese in their maintaining pacifism to the rest of the world at the age of globalization.

In the historic traditions of the Chinese nation, the despotism of the emperor opposite to the liberalism evolved from the Chinese patriarchal system and seriously impeded the progress of the Chinese nation. This has been harshly criticized by independent thinkers from generation to generation. Nevertheless, we also come to realize that we have something in the traditions of thousands of years that could be creatively transformed into what the majority of the people in the world observe as universal ethics. The possible example is the concept of Chinese

¹ Qian Mu, *The Introduction to Chinese Culture* (Beijing: The Commercial Press, 1994), p. 37.

cosmopolitan space. As the famous logician Jin Yuelin observed, “we may come to the points of Chinese cosmopolitanism in certain senses if we sometimes expound the Chinese cosmopolitan space in its natural geographic sense and sometimes in its universal ethical sense, and our emphasis may be shifted from this to that, then and now.”² Thus in the contents of universal ethics in Chinese cosmopolitan space we may extract liberalism of Chinese style, that is, being “free for” from being “free from” in contrast with the traditional western style. The liberalism contained in the concept of Chinese cosmopolitan space is tinged with the positive idea of freedom to accomplish a kind of universal feats, that is, to make a harmonious world under the heaven. Liberalism of this kind is reiterated in one of classics of Confucian school as “uniting the world (under the heaven) into a family and China a personhood.”³ This harmonious world craved for by Confucian scholars is one “with perfect equal rights, perfect justice, perfect humaneness and perfect governance. We could not find a better paradise in this human world than this world with universal ethics.”⁴ The very idea of Chinese cosmopolitan space with universal ethics paved the way for modern Chinese to have introduced western communism which propagandizes total liberty for everyman and helped modern Chinese intellectuals to appreciate rights for liberty advocated in western democratic societies. In a confined instance, the ideal of Chinese cosmopolitan space with a lofty goal of emancipating a world under the heaven or shouldering the burden of the world under heaven is the barest motive for any educated person. Thus the liberalism indicated in the Chinese cosmopolitan space is emphasized more from individual moral conscientiousness than legal rights guaranteed by social contract as in the case in the western world. This emphasis of Chinese liberalism could be reinforced by western legitimacy as well as rendering some kind of insights into the complexity of legal process for safeguarding individual liberty in the west.

Conclusion

The concept of Chinese cosmopolitan space originated from the ancient China bears clear vestiges of geographic experiences of the patriarchal societies, but its ethical contents have been constantly enriched with the expansion of the Chinese geographic experiences and the introduction of alien cultures. The consequence of this contact and evolution is seen in the transformation from geographic experiences to universal ethical virtues and from China to the world as well as from

² Feng Youlan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy* (Beijing: Beijing University Press, 1985), p. 226.

³ Universal Ruling, *The Book of Proprieties* (*liji, liyun*) (Changsha: Yuelu Press, 1989), p. 371.

⁴ Kang Youwei, “The Book of Grand Harmony (*datongshu*),” in Feng Youlan, *The New History of Chinese Philosophy* (Beijing: People’s Press, 1989), Vol.6, p. 120.

ethical liberalism to legal liberalism. This transformation consolidated the national identity for all Chinese peoples in their history and helped the Chinese to maintain the policy of pacifism in her foreign relations. The notions of Chinese cosmopolitan space expressed in “all peoples within the four seas (the world) are brothers” (*sihaizhinei jie xiongdi*), “he who commands people’s consent commands a world under the heaven” (*de renxin zhe de tianxia*), “regarding China as one person and a world under the heaven one family” (*zhongguo yiren, tianxia yijia*), “building a common world under the heaven” (*tianxia datong*), “seeking justice for a world under the heaven” (*tianxia weigong*) are proper to be thought of as the resources for the Chinese people to respond to the world currents of peace and development. We are also optimistic that the universal virtue revealed in the concept of the Chinese cosmopolitan space may positively be accepted as one kind of the global values such as liberalism, human rights, and some other entries of contents.

Chapter 16

Moral Happiness of Confucius and Yan Hui (*kongyan lechu*)

Introduction

A Confucian Saint is often believed to share four merits for his life: high position, attracting bonuses, good reputation, and long life. But the model of both Confucius and his most favored disciple Yan Hui did not testify to these merits in their lifetime. Confucius lived a miserable life and longer than average of his peers, often being chased after and driven out by dukes like a stray dog, and Yan Hui died in poverty at the age of 29. Yet both Confucius and Yan Hui were quite satisfied with their lives by demonstrating the beauty and merits of moral lives that philosophers could expect. So the life philosophy exhibited in Confucius and Yan Hui provoked a heated debate among Neo-Confucians: What is the sense of Moral Happiness of Confucius and Yan Hui (*kongyan lechu*)? The exploration into this Moral Happiness of Confucius and Yan Hui became an intellectual focus of the key exponents of Neo-Confucianism in the Song Dynasty. The Cheng brothers and Zhu Xi expounded it in connection with cosmology and epistemology, that is, any secular misfortune that occurred to human beings can be dwindled into nothing by comparing to cosmic dynamics or rather such universal consciousness would comparatively increase moral happiness of philosophers. Therefore, the moral happiness with a Chinese philosophical bent reveals the truth that the understanding of natural beauty and cosmic dynamics succinctly constitutes the optimistic spirituality permanently inspiring a Confucian believer to live as a saint.

Happiness of Confucius and Yan Hui from Ethical Perspective

There are three main kinds of life philosophy in the Chinese traditional culture, represented by, respectively, Confucianism, Taoism or Daoism, and Buddhism. Confucians prefer enjoying life(*lesheng*), Daoists eternal life(*changsheng*), and Buddhists emptying life(*wusheng*).The Daoist eternal life wishes to imitate the

never-ceasing creation of life in the cosmos, Buddhist emptying life means to nullify physical life by Prajñā or referring to dependent origination, Confucian enjoying life appreciates the unity between life and cosmic dynamics by subjectively perceiving it. This perceived unity as such was explained by Confucian scholars in the Song Dynasty as Happiness of Confucius and Yan Hui, its essence being the moral happiness based on Confucian ethics.

The Happiness of Confucius and Yan Hui is only a summary of the life philosophy by Confucian scholars of the Song Dynasty, but the heroes in the summary, Master Confucius and his most talented disciple Yan Hui, have been frequently referred to by both Confucians and Daoists in their reflections upon life philosophies. In the Chinese Warring States Period(c.475-221B.C.), Mencius eulogized Confucius as the cream of human, or human saint, and extolled Yan Hui to have a similar pursuit of Saint King Shun. In the Daoist classic *The Works of Zhuang Zi*, both Confucius and Yan Hui were cited as ideal figures to stand for absolute liberalism in cosmic meditation. However, in the Confucian tradition, it was only in Neo-Confucianism in the Song Dynasty that Confucius and Yan Hui were marked off as role models for moral happiness as the authentic life philosophy in Chinese culture. Cheng Mingdao or Cheng Hao, the elder of the Cheng brothers of the Song Dynasty, once recalled, “When I was a disciple to Zhou Dunyi, he often insisted on our inquiry to perceive the happiness of Confucius and Yan Hui.”¹ The reflections on this inquiry by Confucian scholars of the Song Dynasty were merited later as the Moral Happiness of Confucius and Yan Hui(*kongyan lechu*). Although acknowledging that both Confucius and Yan Hui led miserable lives in their lifetime, yet Neo-Confucians would rather confine them in secular and social spheres and on the spiritual and transcendental spheres they managed to reveal the martyred Confucian Saints of their invaluable assets to be appreciated as moral happiness. In *the Analects*, Confucius himself was described as “having simple food and drinking cold water, cushioning head on his own arm, yet feeling happy wholeheartedly.”² Yan Hui was also depicted as “living on meager food, drinking cold water, setting up home in a narrow lane, and hardship as such never disrupts Yan Hui in his spiritual delight.”³ These are the situations upon which the Moral Happiness of Confucius and Yan Hui was reflected. In such secular embarrassments, people will suffer usually from extreme distress, but Confucius and Yan Hui distinguished themselves as delighting on something spiritual and transcendent. Therefore, Zhou Dunyi, Cheng Hao’s tutor, generalized the mental sphere of Confucius and Yan Hui thus: “People usually aspire to being rich and noble, yet Yan Hui was not attracted by such secular happiness and not annoyed by poverty and distress. What mentality is peculiar with him? I would rather conclude that there must be something in the universe transcending these

¹ Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi, *The Complete Works of Cheng Brothers (er cheng ji)*(Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 1981), Vol. I. Chap. 2, p. 16.

² Shu Er, *The Analects of Confucius (lunyu, shu er)*.

³ Yong Ye, *The Analects of Confucius (lunyu, yong ye)*.

secular attractions, for these cosmic merits people are justified to ignore the worldly charms, that is, to prefer Largeness to Smallness.”⁴ Largeness in Zhou’s philosophy is human mental sphere based on cosmopolitanism, while Smallness indicates physical features of human body or social attainments. In the Song Dynasty, Confucian scholars often delineated value orientation by advocating cosmic Largeness in contrast with physical Smallness, and the Moral Happiness of Confucius and Yan Hui was the prominent symbol of such value orientation.

Boundless Happiness Revealed in Natural World

The boundless happiness of humans must be united with the eternity of life before it can be logically expounded, so Confucian scholars tended to distinguish between two categories of happiness, that is, the pleasure of body and the amusement of the soul. Therefore, we see boundaries in physical joy and no boundaries in metaphysical entertainment. Obviously, the moral happiness of Confucius and Yan Hui comes into the category of metaphysical entertainment, being boundless in its spirituality. Here, we can sense some similarities shown in Socrates in his distinction between physical life and the free soul which solaced his choosing to drink hemlock. In our experiential world, boundlessness and eternity is frequently associated with the quintessence of cosmos, hence philosophical Largeness being generalized in cosmic terms. With this cosmic Largeness, philosophers are motivated to gain boundless happiness beyond the physically bounded Smallness. The transcendence of Largeness over Smallness is what Mencius stated, “Being motivated by Largeness, a person is never bothered by Smallness.”⁵ “*Being motivated*” refers to human intellectual capacity, boundless cosmos being its logical object. The cosmic boundlessness, in Confucian intellectual structure, bears two senses: the sense of physical cosmology and the sense of spiritual faith. In the west, life philosophy is invariably affiliated to the cosmology revealed in the biblical Genesis, despite its contradiction with physical cosmology. The ethical clue in Spinoza’s philosophy provided a cogent sample to the integration between life philosophy and religious cosmology. For him, the importance of ethics is seen in comprehending the cosmic order and human appropriateness in it. In consequence, a person may not be able to live a decent and ethical life without being conscious of his position in the cosmic order. The similar ethical sense is expressed in the Moral Happiness of Confucius and Yan Hui favored by the Song Dynasty Confucians. Although the concept of such happiness is projected in *Tong Shu*, or Moral Cosmology, its cohesive demonstration was provided in his twin work *The Picture of Cosmic Genesis(taiji tushuo)* by Zhou Dunyi. *The Cosmic*

⁴ Zhou Dunyi, “Yan Hui (yanhui),” in *Universal Scholarship (tong shu)*(Shanghai: Shanghai Classic Press, 1992), Chap. 2, pp. 29–30.

⁵ Gao Zi Shang, *The Works of Mencius. (Mengzi, gaozi shang)*.

Genesis is the cosmological ontology of Confucian philosophy, focusing on the Heaven Way, or Tian Dao (identical to Tao). But the Heaven Way has never been separately discussed from human ethics, being principled by the Integration between Heaven and Human (*tianren heyi*). Thus, *Tong Shu* is inevitably employed to discuss the human revelation from heavenly doctrine proposed in *The Picture of Cosmic Genesis*. The concept *Cheng*, or the cosmic dynamics, is the kernel term in *Tong Shu* as its author elucidated “*Cheng* is the Onto on which Saint bases for his cosmology. The cosmic Largeness originates universal beings, *Cheng* thus being the first push of cosmic evolution. In the ever process of cosmic evolution every being is bound to justify its position in the cosmic order, witnessing *Cheng* as universal doctrine.” This cosmology is never isolated from the base and doctrine of Chinese ethics as demanded by the Integration between Heaven and Human, for which Confucian Saints were morally secured as that “*Cheng* is both the onto and origin of five ethical constants and universal beings. In cosmological sense, its dynamics activates the ever production of all beings; in its ethical sense, its onto justifies all moral accomplishments.”⁶ The five ethical constants of Confucian feature, obviously stated here as Humanity(*ren*), Duty(*yi*), Propriety(*li*), Wisdom(*zhi*), and Truth(*xin*), were thus united with cosmic doctrines. Therefore, the Integration between Heaven and Human in Chinese tradition, Confucian ethical philosophy in particular, is what life philosophy echoes harmoniously cosmology, or the concepts of ethics are construed coherently with those of nature. When Spinoza was labeled as “God-intoxicated man”, God in terms of creator of universe, we would be equally attracted to associate his ethics to that of Confucian, for both clues transmitting convincing messages that natural harmony and eternity reveals boundless ethical merits for human secular concerns. Zhou Dunyi was known in his lifetime as “Never cutting green grasses over his study windows”, simply because he had solid faith in the life equality shared by both the natural world and human beings. His student, Cheng Hao, had also cultivated silent observation over baby chicken and nursed fish, this hobby of his was explained by Zhang Zai, another important Confucian of his peers, as “The windows of Cheng Hao’s study were often shadowed by overgrown grasses. When persuaded to cut them, he promptly refused by saying ‘I cannot do as persuaded, since they bear cosmic dynamics in their existence’. He also ordered a water container ready for nursed fishes as ‘intellectual amusement over universal beings.’ People can have similar sight over grasses and fishes, but Cheng Hao distinguishes himself in reflections over life equality and intellectual amusement. Can such philosophical vision be apprehensive to the flesh and blood of bumpkins?”⁷ According to Cheng Hao, happiness procured from the separation between person and universal beings or conscious human and unconscious beings is definite

⁶ Zhou Dunyi, “Cosmological Dynamics(*cheng*),” in *Universal Scholarship (tong shu)*(Shanghai: Shanghai Classic Press, 1992), Chap. 1, p. 5.

⁷ Huang Zongxi, “Part II, Biography of Mingdao (*mingdao xue an xia*),” in *Biographies of Confucian Scholars in the Song and Yuan Dynasties (song yuan xue an)*(Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 1986), Vol.1, Chap. 14, p. 578.

and bounded, but human conscience of the integrity between subject and object in similar cosmic origin will lead the very person to boundless happiness in extent equal to cosmic dynamics. This boundless happiness is moral happiness affiliated to transcendental and cosmic dynamics. I could not help coining a new term for his reflections, the cosmic ethics. For Cheng Hao explained his reflections by the statement: “The conscience of Ren or Humanity is prerequisite to Confucian scholars, for only in this conscience can he integrate himself with universal beings.”⁸ Furthermore, in Zhang Zai we also have the statements that “All human beings are my brothers and sisters, and they by turn are equal to all universal beings.” These are the humanistic revelations based on natural cosmology, and they are comprehensively associating us to other popular concepts in Chinese tradition as “concerned intimacy without physical lineage”(xiuqi xiangguan), “Metaphysical Sameness Shared by Universal Beings”(tianxia datong) and “Common Wealth Motivated for Universal Beings”(tianxia weigong). These and other similar concepts of Confucian observation are typical of cosmic ethics. Happiness acquired from such cosmic ethics can be termed moral happiness of Confucian style. Accordingly, we can approach the Moral Happiness of Confucius and Yan Hui favored by perceiving the cosmic Largeness over physical Smallness to fully appreciate the boundless spirituality of Confucian life philosophy.

Rational Happiness Realized in Subjective Conscience

We cannot say for sure that moral happiness of Confucian cosmic ethics is fully exposed only in cosmic revelation. For Daoists, they also trace their life philosophy to cosmic origin. Then, what is the difference between Daoists and Confucians in terms of their respective life philosophy? I should therefore add one more feature to Confucian ethics other than cosmic revelation, that is, the merit of subjective conscience. The traditional Confucians were basically educators, their subjective reflections were mainly marked off as Nominative Inculcation (*mingjiao*), represented in the phrase of Right Nouns Are Justified by Coherent Words (*mingzheng yanshun*) in Confucian Analects. This word-to-noun process is invested with a peculiar epistemology of Confucian ethics. In the period of the Wei and Jin Dynasties(220-589.A.D.), the moral happiness associated with Confucian ethics was stated as “pleasure sought in nominative inculcation”(mingjiaozhong ziyou ledi),⁹ and such a statement was a convincing response to intellectual challenges from both Neo-Daoist cosmology and Buddhist epistemology and their life philosophies, giving rise to the rediscovery of heart–nature sect(*xinxingxue*) of

⁸ Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi, *The Complete Works of Cheng Brothers (er cheng ji)*(Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 1981), Vol. I Chap. 2, p. 15.

⁹ Liu Yiqing, “Virtue(*de xing*),” in *Essays and Criticism (shi shuo xin yu)*, annotated and trans. by Xu Shaozao and Wang Wanzhuang (Changchun: Jilin Culture and History Press, 1996), Chap. 1, p. 14.

Confucian tradition. According to Mencius, “the function of heart is to reflect, and spirituality can thus be attained.”¹⁰ and “person should expand his heart to reflect to acknowledge the universal nature, then to apprehend the heavenly mandates, and he should thereby increase his intelligence, cultivate his comprehension to universal nature and accomplish with heavenly mandates.”¹¹ So in the Song Dynasty, the Moral Happiness of Confucius and Yan Hui was also accepted as the similar tradition of heart–nature reflection and nominative inculcation, but with metaphorical personifications in Confucius and Yan Hui, both being worshipped as Great Saint Master and Reincarnated Saint Disciple respectively. In fact, the advocacy of the Moral Happiness of Confucius and Yan Hui was to a great extent inspired by the methodology of Buddhism in the Tang Dynasty, which justified its tradition by patriarchal lineage and heart–nature meditation. But Confucian peculiar merits lie in that its heart–nature reflection can bring about moral happiness in secular daily lives instead of fleeing to deep mountains and isolated temples as those Buddhist monks did. In contrast, Confucian scholars firmly believe that mental happiness can be attained by secular rationality more readily than sacred meditation. If human intuitional intelligence coincides with Buddha nature, why should Buddhist practitioners meditate in secluded temples which would be sheer mental redundancy! Here, we have secular examples in Confucius as “any town with residents of ten families will see guys as faithful as Confucius, but none of them can compete with Confucius in his diligence to learn.”¹² And the example in Yan Hui was given this way, “Yan Hui has been the most diligent student..., his death ends the story of any possible diligent student.”¹³ In their examples we come to realize that they committed themselves to moral happiness by diligent intelligence. Compared to Neo-Daoist methodology in relying on natural instincts and Buddhist sacred meditation and secret enlightenment, Confucian epistemology in nominative inculcation demonstrated its lofty motivation in rational amusement. In *the Doctrine of the Mean*, or Zhong Yong, Confucian scholars are demanded as “to be a gentleperson, he should cultivate his virtue by pursuing scholarship, accomplishing cosmic dynamics in his diligence.” A gentleperson of Confucian style should be endowed with cosmic virtue by his own subjective endeavor, evidencing the glory of life philosophy by way of epistemology. And when Confucian scholars in the Song Dynasty sought to exemplify their “self-realized role model” (*li renji*), they could not have other personality consummation than Confucius and Yan Hui.

The natural vision in cosmology is objective in essence, but it can reveal an ethical message to humans, which by turn is also dependent on subjective conscience to apprehend the eternity and harmony in natural order. Such coherence and interdependence between objective nature and subjective conscience

¹⁰ Gao Zi Shang, *The Works of Mencius* (*mengzi, gaozi shang*).

¹¹ Jin Xin Shang, *The Works of Mencius* (*mengzi, jinxin shang*).

¹² Gong Ye Chang, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, gongyechang*).

¹³ Yong Ye, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, yongye*).

constitute human spirituality, hence a rational happiness. Hence the Confucian moral happiness is nevertheless related to epistemological perspective. With this intellectual frame we feel comfortable to understand the life wisdom and pragmatic ethics in “patience will procure a pacified ocean and tolerance boundless space to co-exist”. Hereby, the natural world is always resorted to as the origin of human strategy and the subjective rationality of moral happiness. The story goes that once Confucius asked his disciples to voice their respective life pursuits, and most of them provided secular clues in administrative affairs, only Zeng Xi offered an exceptional answer, “In warming spring I would cloth myself simple and comfortable. I would also invite several young guys and kids to swim in the river, then singing my way home in breeze.” Upon hearing this, Confucius was moved to claim: “I aspire to be your companion!”¹⁴ The story was later explained by Zhu Xi in the Song Dynasty this way, “the life motivation of Zeng Xi is cogently agreeable with cosmic doctrines. A person can be composed in his behavior only by adhering to cosmic doctrines. In Zeng Xi’s case we see his harmonious spirituality with universal beings in the cosmological process behind his daily chores.”¹⁵ We may refer from Zhu Xi’s explanation to that Confucian ethics is inspired and established by their dear reflections upon cosmic dynamics. This conclusion also leads us to say that human rationality by way of epistemology can also invest the natural world with moral import. That is why Confucian scholars tend to believe moral happiness to be the happiness in maximum, its capacity being equal to that of cosmic dynamics and eternity. I thereby consider that Confucian moral happiness is both cosmically revelatory and subjectively imaginary, and its ethics can also be regarded as one naturally inspired and rationalized.

Cheng Hao once expressed his comprehension on the Moral Happiness of Confucius and Yan Hui in a poem to spotlight the peculiar ethical values endowed to human life by his rationality: “I have been reconciled to all affairs these years, so I may sleep to the time when sun shines over my window. When observing universal beings, I feel myself an intimate companion to all these creatures. If Dao(*tao*) is thought of as a metaphysical Being between heaven and earth, human reflection can certainly penetrate through natural phenomena. Being steadfast and self-disciplined, man can cultivate himself into a saint hero.”¹⁶ In these poetic phrases, Cheng Hao exhibited his conviction that cosmic eternity and dynamics can be attained by rational intuition, which, if transformed into secular virtue, will be further represented as cosmological ethic transcending any social and physical achievements. This is the reason that Confucius and Yan Hui can entertain their moral happiness. The motivation of Confucian scholars to explore into cosmic secrecy by rational reflection is to establish ethical principles for their lives.

¹⁴ Xian Jin, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, xianjin*).

¹⁵ Zhu Xi, “To Xian Jin, in The Analects of Confucius(*lunyu, xianjin*),” in *Annotations to the Four Books*(*sishu jizhu*) (Changsha: Yuelu Press,1987), p. 190.

¹⁶ Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi, *The Complete Works of Cheng Brothers* (*er cheng ji*)(Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 1981), Vol. I, p. 482.

The cosmological principle is generally regarded as Dao, and the outcome of rational exploration is to Obtain Dao (*dedao*), and the person who has eventually obtained Tao is the Saint of Confucian category. This procedure of rational exploration into cosmic dynamics can be compared with Greek philosophers whose rational exploration into cosmic dynamics was more or less strictly confined to absolute yet objective laws, so the obtainers of the cosmological laws are sages of Greek category. By this contrast, we note the distinction between Confucian scholars in seeking moral happiness and Greek philosophers in perceiving objective laws. For this specialty of rational exploration, Zhou Dunyi exclaimed that “a lofty-minded person takes Tao as the most valuable and spiritual peace as the richest, and such spiritual composure leaves nothing to be further desired. With such personality I am fully qualified to belittle royal titles and depreciate gold and gems,” and “the Tao of Saints is heard through ears, perceived at heart, cherished as virtue and careered as holy undertaking. He who just confines Saint’s Tao literally other than socially, remains a scholar of narrow-mindedness!”¹⁷ In his exposition, Zhou managed to integrate harmoniously the cosmology, rationality, and moral happiness in the hope to vindicate the invaluable merits of human spirituality rather than to confine human rationality in acknowledging objective laws or subjective intelligence. Through the metaphor of Confucius and Yan Hui, the Song Dynasty Confucians aim to constitute a spiritual entity among cosmology, epistemology and ethics. This academic ambition reveals the soul of the Confucian Saint’s scholarship, distinguished itself from the cosmology of natural science, philosophy of epistemological bent, and ethics of religious commitment in the west. Therefore, scholars influenced by western intellectual tradition tend to classify Confucian scholarship in the Song Dynasty as Air Sect(*qixue*, Air as the cosmic substance in Confucian cosmology), Heart Sect(*xinxue*) and Rationale Sect(*lixue*). However, I would hesitate to agree with these academic classifications on the Song Dynasty Confucianism, as they may intrinsically disrupt the cohesion and continuity of Confucian moral happiness, leaving Confucian spirit and ethic alienated.

Some Comments

To answer the question of what is the Moral Happiness of Confucius and Yan Hui, Cheng Hao once wrote a prose entitled On Yan Hui’s Scholarship, focused on these words: “What scholarship does Yan Hui favor the most? It is the scholarship to cultivate a Saint’s Tao.”¹⁸ We may conclude that Saint’s Tao in this context is both the actual contents and feature of Confucian reflections. In his tutor’s work *Tong Shu*,

¹⁷ Zhou Dunyi, “Rich and Noble(*fugui*),” in *Universal Scholarship(tong shu)* (Shanghai: Shanghai Classic Press, 1992), pp. 42–43.

¹⁸ Huang Zongxi, “Part II, Biography of Yichuan(*yichuan xue an xia*),” in *Biographies of Confucian Scholars in the Song and Yuan Dynasties (song yuan xue an)*(Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 1986), Vol.1, Chap. 16, p. 642.

the feature of Confucian reflections was proposed as “Scholars are expected to become sages, sages to become saints, saints to integrate themselves with heaven.” Heaven, in this process, is the ultimate reality of Confucian faith, being constituted of cosmological and ethical entities. So what Cheng Hao believed to be the Saint’s Dao is the Dao of Heaven(*tiandao*), based on which Chinese Confucian intellectuals translated Catholic into The Doctrines Revealed by Heavenly Master(*tianzhujiao*), indicative of value orientation in its relevant cosmology.

In the Ming Dynasty a Confucian pragmatist, or an affiliate to Taizhou School, Wang Gen contributed a short poem to credit the Moral Happiness of Confucius and Yan Hui, “The Moral Happiness originates at human heart, but the very heart can also be eclipsed by selfishness. Whoever rids himself of selfishness, he is secured to regain his Moral Happiness. Freeing from selfish cage and happiness regained is a process to cultivate, and happiness itself is being procured by the process. This cultivation can not be valid if happiness not procured, and happiness can not be cherished if cultivation not accomplished.”¹⁹ Here, the first four lines approach ethic from Confucian epistemology, exhibiting the conscious feats of Confucian moral happiness. But the remaining four lines just repeat the connection between epistemology and ethic, leaving cosmologically human message oblivious and obscuring the Confucian virtues revealed by heavenly mandates. The consequence of his exposition indicates that he or other pragmatic Confucians as well confused the means and end of happiness, shadowing attaining Dao by acknowledging Dao (Dao being equal to Tao), hence sacrificing the moral merits of Confucian ethics. Of course, in our daily lives Confucian ethic has been distorted and abused on many occasions, taking the Moral Happiness of Confucius and Yan Hui as Moral Happiness in Physical Suffering. This distorting and abusing invariably leads to severe criticism of the Confucian Hypocrisy(*jiadaoxue*) and Nominative Inculcation of Devouring Human Beings(*chiren de lijiao*) in the modern movements of a new culture sparked off by the May Fourth Movement in 1919. As a contemporary Confucian scholar I appreciate the intellectual merits of this criticism in the sense that they can be inspiring and instructive in purging Confucian ethics of the fallacies wrongly imposed on it and in reconstructing and reinvigorating modern ethics on Confucian styled cosmology and epistemology. I am reasonably convinced that the classical proposition of the Moral Happiness of Confucius and Yan Hui represents the value orientation based on Confucian spirituality and mental commitment instead of pain or pleasure in terms of flesh and blood. Therefore, we can see clearly that the Confucian happiness has nothing to do with stoic-oriented happiness such as Seeking Pleasure in Pain(*kuzhongzuole*) or Feeling Pain As Gain(*yikuweile*) since it is the transcending above pain and gain at quite different spheres. It is the very transcendence that tinges Confucian ethics with strong mood of religious commitment, and endows Confucian epistemology with obvious

¹⁹ Huang Zongxi, “Biographies of Taizhou School(*taizhou xue an*),” in *Biographies of Confucian Scholars in the Ming Dynasty*(*mingru xue an*), reversed edition, (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 1985), Vol. II, Chap. 32, p. 718.

intuitional feats. Such mood and feats are reflected randomly in the concepts of Cosmology of Heaven Producing All Things(*tiansheng wanwu*), Epistemology of Human Cherished with Intuitional Intelligence(*ren gui you liangzhi*) and Ethics of Performing Heavenly Mission by Person(*titianxingdao*). In a structure of interdependent cosmology, epistemology, and ethics we may fully and positively explore what the phrase of the Moral Happiness of Confucius and Yan Hui expresses.

Chapter 17

Proprieties as Governmental Rules of Confucian Hermeneutics

Introduction

The Spring and Autumn Period is a special phase of Social Chaos in Ancient China. *Li* (Rule of Rite) was then the governmental rule of the Zhou Dynasty, into which Confucius introduced *Xiao* (filial piety), *Zhong* (loyalty) and *Yi* (righteousness or cosmopolitan commitment) as governmental constituents at family, dukedom, and universe levels respectively. The governmental rule of Confucian investigation has its focus on the right to live as human beings and family ethos. In the constitutional structure of families, dukedoms, and universe the power and right, responsibility and obligation have been balanced between father and his sons, duke and his subjects, as well as emperor and his dukes. The power of father over sons, duke over subjects, and emperor over dukes is held in check by being morally obliged to be a kind father for sons, benevolent duke for subjects, and generous emperor for dukes, constituting a universally harmonious polity. By this investigation, Confucius ushered into Chinese political and legal traditions a Rule of Virtue, paving the base of governmental rule with *Li* as its mainstay and *Xing* (Rule of Punishment) as its subordinate and establishing the principles for peaceful international relations featured as Unified Humanity for Diversified Worlds (*tianxia ru rien*).

Chinese intellectual tradition based on systematic theories may trace its origin to The Spring and Autumn Period of 2,600 B.C., with Confucian scholarship initiated by Confucius as its most popular paradigm. The Spring and Autumn Period basically lasting from 770 to 476 B.C. is acknowledged as the identity of history of Dukedom Lu, the motherland of Confucius, with *the Spring and Autumn Annals* as its official documentary records. Ever since, Chinese scholars have adopted the term Spring and Autumn to denote the first half of the Eastern Zhou Dynasty, and the later half of the Eastern Zhou Dynasty was thus termed as The Warring States Period (475–221 B.C.). In the periods of Spring and Autumn, and Warring States of 550 years in the Eastern Zhou Dynasty, China witnessed unprecedented ups and downs in her political history, the coalition of dukedoms having been gradually replaced by an imperial rule dictated by Dukedom Qin. The first Qin Empire established by Qin Shi

Huang lasted only 15 years, but this imperial rule had been modeled after by the consecutive emperors through Chinese history until Dr. Sun Yat-sen led his Chinese National People's Party (KMT) to overthrow the Chinese imperial rule in 1912 A.D.. The imperial rule initiated by Qin Shi Huang and ended by Dr. Sun Yat-sen is what Wang Fuzhi, the most sophisticated thinker in the late Ming Dynasty, termed as the commanderis-districts-counties-hundred-family-units governance (*junxianzhi*) remained unchanged for more than 2,000 years. The ideological principle guiding this imperial governance is the combination of visible Confucianism and invisible Legalism, Confucianism, thus being worshipped as the most authoritative this-worldly philosophy in Chinese political and legal histories; such a philosophy has provided the Chinese traditional political and legal norms with the rule of *Li*, otherwise the Rule of Ritual intended at *Ren* (humaneness), academically termed as Scholarship Integrating Rule with Humanities (*renli zhi xue*).

Under Heaven: Cosmos With Political–Ethical Features

The dynasties of Xia, Shang, and Zhou are the idealized periods of harmonious politics advocated by Confucian scholars, abbreviated as the Three Dynasties, and their originators are worshipped as Saint Kings, their actual leaders being respected as the Sons of Heaven (*tianzi*). Domains administered by the Sons of Heaven are, therefore, narrated as the area under heaven. The area under heaven is both the concept of the geographic world and the ideal of political and ethical norms, and Confucian scholars tended to denote its political and legal connotations by this popular quotation: “All of the land under the heaven belongs to the king and all of the people to the boundary of the earth are the king’s subjects.”¹

The world under heaven in the Spring and Autumn Period was the administrative territory constituting more than 120 small and large dukedoms, all of them being the fiefs under the rule of the Son of Heaven in the Zhou Dynasty, the common master of all dukes, consecrated either for royal family ties, merited courtiers, relatives to royal family by marriage, or noble heritage. For instance, Dukedom Qi was the fief donated to one of the founding fathers of the Zhou Dynasty, Jiang Tai Gong, Dukedom Lu, the motherland of Confucius was the fief donated to the younger brother of Wu Wang, the Founding King of the Zhou Dynasty, while Dukedom Wei where Confucius went to interview the obscene Duchess Nan Zi was the fief of another younger brother of Wu Wang named Kang Shu, thus Confucius commented: “the political relations between Dukedoms Lu and Wei is that of brothers.”² Besides the Dukedoms of Lu, Wei and Qi, there were such Dukedoms as Cao, Chen, Cai, Chu, Kuang, and even Jin where Confucius once intended to travel but failed due to their domestic turmoil.

¹ Northern Hill·Minor Elegance, *The Book of Poetry* (*shijing*, *beishan xiaoya*).

² Zi Lu, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu*, *zilu*).

Subordinate to these dukedoms were dependent towns aggregated by a thousand families and affiliated to feudal elites were a hundred-vehicle families. Among dukedoms the larger ones were named States of Ten-Thousand-Vehicle and the smaller ones States of Thousand-Vehicle. Vehicle was the war chariot by its origin which was guided by an officer with dozens of infantrymen, also used as a unit to calculate the power of soldiers and dukedoms. During the Spring and Autumn Period, there were only Five Superpowers called Dukedom of Ten-Thousand-Vehicle, being Qi, Jin, Chu, Wu, and Yue. The world of the Chinese perspective was then dominated by these five superpowers, a special phase of history described by historian Sima Qian as “The royal family after its rulers of You and Li became weak and powerful dukedoms began to dictate the world, and Five Superpowers succeeded one by another.”³ The phase of Five Superpowers was then succeeded by Seven Heroes, another seven powerful dukedoms. Therefore, both the Five Superpowers at Spring and Autumn Period and Seven Heroes at Warring States Period were dukedoms of Ten-Thousand-Vehicle dominating the world of Chinese perspective; they all aspired after the rule of a common master under heaven and the replacement of Zhou’s hegemony by political and diplomatic sophistication and military expedition.

The heartland of King Zhou, the son of heaven, was termed the king’s dominion, but the outskirts of this dominion were collectively guarded by dukedoms of Qi, Lu, Wei, Song, Jin, Yan, and some other big powers, who committed themselves to the tributes and obligations for King Zhou, manipulating his politics and safeguarding the territories and performing cultural proprieties of King Zhou, representing the master subject relations between the Son of Heaven at the center and his dukes at the outskirts. According to the conceptions in the Three Dynasties, the center under heaven was the residence for the Son of Heaven termed as China, i.e., the capital safeguarded by its surrounding dukedoms, distant from China was surrounded by all sorts of Chinese dukedoms. Further away from these dukedoms were scattered alien barbarians; the Chinese character of a barbarian bears the picture of the edge parts of a garment hinting their less important positions than the center parts of the garment termed in Chinese as leading parts like collars and sleeves; the combination of collars and sleeves in Chinese characters means “leaders” (*lingxiu*). Thus the distance from the capital bore the sense of political and legal importance as expressed in the “domain of China is more important than surrounding Chinese dukedoms which are more important than distant alien barbarians.”⁴ We even saw the relations between the criminal penalties and the distance within this picture of the world under heaven, similar to the modern exile in the West where convicts are sentenced to far away America or Oceania.

³ Sima Qian, “Author’s Preface to the Historical Records (*shiji, taishigong zixu*)”, in *The Twenty-Four Histories* (Version of Simplified Chinese) (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 2000) Vol. 130, p. 2496.

⁴ He Xiu, “Annotations to the Year of Duke Yin,” in *Annotations to the Commentaries of Gong Yanguao of The Four Categories in Chinese Cultural Essentials* (*sibu jingyao, gongyangzhuan zhu*) (Shanghai: Shanghai Classic Press, 1993), Vol. 2, p. 2200.

The then Chinese sentences were divided into three categories; the most offensive felonies were punished by being ostracized to distant barbarian areas, less offensive felonies to less distant dukedoms of alien surnames different from that of royal families, and the least offensive felonies to the surrounding dukedoms with similar surnames of royal families. The Four Barbarian Areas (*siyi*) were so named in the East, West, South, and North directions. This geography of ancient Chinese territory was metaphorically depicted as a garment, its center being collars and sleeves, its edges being barbarian areas, in between being dukedoms of Qi, Lu, Song, and Wei closer to the Capital Luo Yi, now city Luoyang in today's Henan Province, as consecrated domains for the King's merited veteran generals and relatives, and more distanced dukedoms as Jin, Chu, Yan, and Qin being donated or later annexed domains bordering with barbarians.

The difference between Chinese subjected to the Son of Heaven and the barbarians lies not only in their geographic distance but also in styles of life, which were social norms or customs as observed in the statement: "Chinese and barbarians, or all the persons in five directions of east, west, south, north and center have their respective permanent natures. *Yi* people in the alien east bare their hairs, tattoo their bodies and eat uncooked food; *Man* people in the alien south tattoo on their foreheads and walk on barefoot; *Rong* people in the alien west bare their hairs, wear animal skins and eat no grains; *Di* people in the alien north wear birds feathers, live in caves and eat no grains."⁵ Before the Zhou Dynasty, the Chinese ancestors used to associate the styles of dressing with the degrees of civilization and the rule of social harmony, believing Chinese were more civilized than remote barbarians by dressing in garments, caps, and official robes while the barbarians bore untidy hair and exposed left arm unclothed. Therefore, the political constitution of Chinese dukedoms before the Zhou Dynasty was depicted as "Saints Huangdi, Yao and Shun ruled the world under heaven by dressing properly, modeling itself after the natural order upper heaven and down earth."⁶ This nature modeled political constitution has something in common with the three attributes of God in religious political constitution in the west, i.e., God as creator, lawgiver, and grand judge. According to Confucian classic that Heaven and Earth (*Male qian* and *Female kun*) created cosmos by Grand virtue, indicating universal fairness; if the created universe could harmoniously exist and endure, it only demonstrates the validity of the natural laws; and if everything under heaven had its individual right to co-exist peacefully, it definitely would reveal the rule of a grand peace consecrated with divinity. So the rule of proper dressing is the incipient metaphor of the natural law theory in ancient Chinese intelligence. But in the historical stage of the Zhou Dynasty, the rule of dressing remained no more a valid metaphor for social rule, therefore Duke Zhou, the saint regent of the royal family, began introducing a new mode of rule called *Zhou Li* (proprieties designed by Duke Zhou), replacing rule of dressing by rule of proprieties and music

⁵ Constitution, *The Book of Proprieties*(*lij, wangzhi*) (Changsha: Yuelu Press, 1989), p. 333.

⁶ Xi Ci Xia, *The Book of Changes* (*zhouyi, xicizhuan xia*).

(proprieties and music performing at death, marriage, war, and other social events), thus the rule was named the Rule of Proprieties (*lizhi*), the very sense of this rule of proprieties was further explained as “proprieties are seen as heavenly vertical principle, earthly horizontal principle and humanly social guidance. The principles of heaven and earth are the natural laws which invariably guide human beings in their social activities since human community is part of the natural world. Everything in the universe is constituted by heavenly reason and earthly substance, the intercommunication of which resulted in the substantial evolution of basic cosmic elements.”⁷ This is the comprehensive and concise expression in combining natural laws and cosmos which parallels Thomas Aquinas some 1700 years later in generalizing the laws of eternity, nature, human, and divinity into a Christian legal system. Much similar to the statement by Thomas that only a legal system applicable in the Christian world may symbolize civilized society, the Chinese thinkers of the Confucian age tended to associate the rule of proprieties with civilized human beings, otherwise human beings were believed uncivilized, remaining as beasts like barbarians. Therefore, the term under the heaven was the criterion for the ancient Chinese to evaluate the civilized political constitution, the principle under the heaven was Li, the proprieties, uniting the compulsory will of state power with ethical awareness of individual. A master Confucian scholar in the Ming Dynasty, Wang Fuzhi once concluded the feature and progress of Chinese political constitution by saying: “What ancient Chinese assumed the world under the heaven was the world of barbarians before the saint King Huangdi, but this world far back before our legendary ancestor Tai Hao was simply the one similar to that of beasts.”⁸ His judgment reminds us that the concepts of ethnicity, geography, and even animal nature were not dead stereotypes defying evolution in ancient Chinese world view, the importance of their ideology lying in intellectual evolution, like the replacement of heaven-earth-modeled rule of dressing by humanity-oriented rule of proprieties. They tended to be more open and free to the concept of China as the geographic center under heaven than Christians assuming Jerusalem as the center of the world. What China meant to them gradually became an intellectual concept of virtue, which may transplant with Dynasties, dressing, and moving, so we may frequent these ethical entries with geography as the Eastern Migration of the Zhou Dynasty (*zhoushi dongqian*), Southern Migration of Dress and Caps (*Yi Guan Nan Du*), and Political Reform by Moving Capital (*qiandu bianfa*).

⁷ Wang Shaoqian, Jin Xiuzhen and Wang Fengchun, “Year 25, Duke Zhao (*zhaogong*),” in *The Commentaries of Zuo Qiuming in Modern Chinese* (*zuozhuan quanyi*) (Guiyang: Guizhou People’s Press, 1990), Vol. II, p. 1341.

⁸ Wang Fuzhi, *Some Reflections and Interpretations* (*siwenlu, si jie*) (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 1956), p. 72.

Proprieties (*li*) as Universal Norms

In the world where Confucius lived, *Li*, or proprieties (mainly in the forms of dance and music) were worshipped as compulsory social norms ruling both the natural world and human societies, guiding China, Chinese dukedoms, as well as distant barbarians in their ways of living and social activities. Yet, the proprieties specific to Confucius or his followers were the proprieties of Duke Zhou (the young brother of King Zhou and also a regent king to the baby heir of Zhou Empire), which were designated for his political administration, leaving barbarian proprieties in ignorance. In the Han Dynasty after the short-lived Qin Dynasty of the Legalist politician, Confucian scholars began to debate why the ritual constitutionalism of Duke Zhou was finally replaced by barbarian constitutionalism of Qin legalists? Qin Dukedom where legalists were politically popular was typical of “sharing similar customs of barbarians, ranking themselves with tigers and wolves, bereft of proprieties and justice but filled with hypocrisies.”⁹ Such political situation provoked heat debates among Confucian scholars and pragmatic officials in the Han royal administration. And it even encourages us to reflect in our times how barbarians behave themselves according to their own proprieties. Their proprieties, as they were, proved to be the political and social norms specific to their customs, their value orientation being utilitarian and positive, contrary to that of Duke Zhou being ethical and idealist. People in the west are inclined to depict proprieties or social norms of utilitarianism as positivism while the proprieties or social norms of idealism as the natural law theory. But in the original terms of Confucius, western legal positivism was analogous to constitutional and legal punishment (*zheng xing*) while natural law theory to ritual and ethical constitutionalism (*de li*), which was, in turn, abbreviated as the unity between proprieties and laws (*li liu*). In fact, I would rather assume that all customs socially and compulsorily observed should be equally regarded as proprieties, despite their being applicable in dukedoms entitled Three Jin, Jing Chu, Xi Qin popular with barbarian norms. The only difference lies in that they value other orientations and legal aims than those of Zhou Proprieties (*zhouli*). Thus, in the Han Dynasty, proprieties were universally accepted as compulsory social norms and commonly obliged ways of living, with the commentaries going thus: “The purpose and functions of Confucius in editing Spring and Autumn Annals lie in that dukes who follow the barbarian proprieties should be treated as barbarians while barbarians entering the Chinese territory should be treated as Chinese.”¹⁰ This is the philosophy of debate between Chinese and alien barbarians (*yixiazhibian* or *xiayizhibian*) which has been accompanying Chinese history ever since the Zhou Dynasty. However, in the Han Dynasty,

⁹ Sima Qian, “Genealogy Wei in the Historical Records (*shiji, wei shijia*)”, in *The Twenty-Four Histories* (Version of Simplified Chinese) (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 2000) Vol. 44, p. 1502.

¹⁰ Han Yu, “Yuan Dao,” in *The Complete Works of Han Yu* (*hanchangli quanji*) (Beijing: China Bookstore Press, 1991), chap.11, p. 174.

the debates between the Chinese and the barbarians came to a constitutional and legal conclusion that proprieties should be the popular and authoritative norms to sustain a person in Han China, and ever since any person, either Chinese or barbarian, who follows Confucian proprieties has been culturally and legally accepted as Chinese, or the Han people. That is why Han people have been identical to Chinese since the Han Dynasty and remain the largest population of nationalities in China, while all persons in other dozens of dynasties in Chinese history can only be identical with each specific dynasty such as the Jin people, the Tang people, the Song people, the Ming people, and so on. Anyway, in the Han Dynasty, Confucian ethics was officially declared as the national ideology and any person who openly converted himself into Confucian adherent was acknowledged as typical Chinese, the frequently quoted example being Jin Midi, a converted Chinese from the Huns harassing Chinese northern border, was nominated senior rank official in the Han royal court. Therefore, when we apprehend the statement about proprieties either from Confucius or Confucian scholars, we should bear in mind two aspects, one being that proprieties are social norms by essence, the other that proprieties are tinged with Confucian ethics. In the Spring and Autumn Period, the most important political events were religious rituals and campaigns among dukedoms, for religious rituals symbolizing the hierarchical relations in terms of the Spring and Autumn Alliance (*chunqiu huimeng*) and for campaigns aiming at supremacy or commanding other dukes by controlling central king in terms of Unjustified War in the Spring and Autumn Period (*chunqiu wu yizhan*). Theoretically speaking, “No other events greater than religious rituals and campaigns are for dukedoms”,¹¹ meaning religious ceremonies and warfare were justified in safeguarding the authority of the central Son of Heaven, but the alliance among dukedoms and campaigns conducted by ambitious dukes were schemed only for their own hegemony, which in essence sabotaged and spoiled the Proprieties of Zhou (*zhouli*), the universal social norms at that time. Such situation was frequently referred to as “the violations of proprieties and music” (*lihuai yuebeng or libeng yuehuai*). Before Duke Zhou renovated social proprieties, Chinese society was typical of hierarchical religion, with people of the Xia Dynasty being obliged to Heaven’s mandate and people in the Shang Dynasty being protected by their ancestor’s ghosts. But Duke Zhou introduced into the religiously administered political constitution the authority of human virtue (*de*), which was accepted and worshipped by people of the Zhou Dynasty and eventually became the kernel value of the renowned Zhou’s proprieties, the royally mandated rule or the rule of proprieties. The proprieties in the antiquity of Chinese society were “invented by the earliest Chinese ancestors and made known by our legendary hero ancestor

¹¹ Wang Shaoqian, Jin Xiuzhen and Wang Fengchun, “Year 13, Duke Cheng (*cheng cong*),” in *The Commentaries of Zuo Qiuming in Modern Chinese* (*zuo zhuan quanyi*) (Guiyang: Guizhou People’s Press, 1990), Vol. 1, p. 673.

Yellow Emperor”,¹² which literally meaning “proprieties are performing religious rituals in the hope of inviting ancestor’s divine donations”.¹³ Once renovated by Duke Zhou, the traditional proprieties practiced in the previous two dynasties had been turned into universally observed social norms representing sovereign will. That is why a politician named Zi Chan, who codified criminal law by molding pillar defined proprieties (*li*) as heavenly vertical principle, earthly horizontal principle, and humanly social guidance. His definition suggests that law must be justified by divine and natural reason before it can be universally observed as social rules. This suggestion was then more convincingly explained by another Confucian master scholar Xun Zi as “Human being is born with desire, which naturally motivates people to gain something. If human desire for gaining is motivated without rules, strife will invariably arise, which in turn will bring about chaos leading to social poverty. So our saint kings invented proprieties to rule over the possible chaotic quarrels”.¹⁴ In his explanation we come to realize that proprieties have been designated what today’s man-made laws have declared as human rights and obligations, specifying the contents and boundaries of various kinds of proprieties.

In the social relations in the Spring and Autumn Period, the mandatory essence of proprieties was expressed mainly in the relations between the Son of Heaven at center and his dukes in the surrounding areas, between dukedoms and their dependencies, and even between Chinese dukedoms and barbarians. The applications of proprieties in these relations were the balance between rights and obligations, and powers and responsibilities. The central powers represented by the son of heaven, the constitutional legitimacy of various dukedoms and even the ethnicity of barbarians were differentiated and codified by their particular proprieties. To the subjects directly manipulated by the sons of heaven in the Zhou Dynasty, proprieties were the legal stipulations of rights and obligations, but to the relations between Chinese dukedoms and barbarians, proprieties were claimed as the cultural identifications between Chinese civilians and foreign barbarians. Therefore, we could also possibly state that proprieties are ethically valued social norms of Chinese legal tradition dominated by Confucian ideology. And what is generally stipulated as the violation of human rights was specifically prohibited by Confucius as “whatever violates the proprieties should be prohibited from seeing, listening, speaking and acting”.¹⁵ These statements were his explanations for proprieties as penal and forbidden regulations in connection with “proprieties are

¹² Kong Yingdao, “Preface to the True Sense of The Book of Proprieties (*lijì, zhengyi xu*),” in *The Four Categories in Chinese Cultural Essentials* (*sibu jingyao*) (Shanghai: Shanghai Classic Press, 1993), Vol. 1, p. 1224.

¹³ Xu Shen, “Annotations to Chinese Characters (*shuowen jiezi*),” in *The Four Categories in Chinese Cultural Essentials* (*sibu jingyao*) (Shanghai: Shanghai Classic Press, 1993), Vol. 3, p. 3.

¹⁴ On the Proprieties, *The Works of Xun Zi*. (*xunzi, lilun*).

¹⁵ Yan Yuan, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, yanyuan*).

guidance for country, principles for society, order for people and fortune for our descendents".¹⁶ His statements further encouraged Chen Chong, a Confucian minister in Han Dynasty, to conclude that legal justice was exacted when proprieties were violated. As for ethical features of proprieties, Confucius agreed with traditional assessments made in the proprieties of Duke Zhou that barbarians were uncivilized by bearing hairs untidy and left-arm unsleeved, and by eating uncooked food and living in the cave. As the applicable social norm, Confucius believed that proprieties were both politically and legally functional and religiously ethical. In his answer to the questions about proprieties socially obligatory, Confucius addressed to his disciples, "Truthful to what you say and faithful to what you respect, this is equally applicable even among the barbarians. If you betray what you say and disgrace what you respect, it would not be applicable even among Chinese dukes. Wherever you stand the words of truth and faith were assumed appearing in your mind's eyes; whenever you sit in the horse cart, these words are imagined being inscribed on the cart's beams. This being honestly born in mind, one can behave properly in society. Zi Zhang, a disciple who put questions to his tutor, wrote these answers on his robe belt".¹⁷ Truthful to what one says and faithful to what one respects are the representations of proprieties in social life, so his students inscribe these precepts on their cloths and belts as codes of actions and symbols of civilized beings. These concepts and precepts were later on accumulated into Chinese social tradition of respecting the proprieties and abiding by the laws. Logically speaking, if proprieties were universally accepted as socially obligatory rules, it would equitably be applicable to both Chinese and the barbarians. The legal and ethical equity was actually proposed by Confucius in his statement of "proprieties are social and universal norms" as to rectify the then stereotyped conviction about proprieties in the Spring and Autumn Period that "proprieties are not applicable to the plebeians while penalties are not intended for the aristocracie".¹⁸ Usually Confucius is quoted as a self-defined guardian of traditional proprieties instead of its reformer, but his proposal of rectifying proprieties from social privileges exclusively for the noble into universally applicable social norms open for the plebeians exhibits his insights into politics and legal philosophy. In his universal norms of proprieties, the traditional plebeians and nobles were politically and legally redefined as people under the heaven, equally ruled by proprieties justified by heavenly principles, hinting at diminishing the stereotyped distinction between Chinese and the barbarians. This analysis also helps us to see the sense of equity and fairness by addressing the plebeians and nobles in universal moral rights in connection with the rule of proprieties that "our ancestors had been barbarians before they were accustomed to the rules of

¹⁶ Wang Shouqian, Jin Xiuzhen and Wang Fengchun, "Year 11, Duke Yin (*yingong*)," in *The Commentaries of Zuo Qiuming in Modern Chinese* (*zuozhuan quanyi*) (Guiyang: Guizhou People's Press, 1990), Vol. I, p. 50.

¹⁷ Wei Ling Gong, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, weilinggong*).

¹⁸ Qu Li, *The Book of Proprieties*. (*lijì, quli*) (Changsha: Yuelu Press, 1989), p. 293.

proprieties and music, the noble men are no more morally aware of the rules of proprieties and music. For my personal choice, I choose to follow the suit of our ancestors”.¹⁹ Rather disappointed at the political and legal situations in his time, Confucius exclaimed his desires to emigrate overseas or even to barbarian areas. The above statements and desires can definitely be estimated as the intellectual innovation toward Zhou’s proprieties by Confucius. In the similar line to enrich the rule of proprieties by Confucian scholars, Zi Xia, another merited disciple of Confucius, added this to proprieties: “To be universally justified by proprieties, all people within the four seas are brothers”.²⁰ Therefore the political and legal charms are revealed in the rule of proprieties by unifying the plebeians and nobles, and the Chinese and the barbarians, and Confucian philosophy of legal equity, and natural harmony is thus introduced and cherished by Confucian scholars and their political adherents in the whole span of imperial administration.

Filial Piety (*xiao*) as Family Norm

The violations of proprieties and music were the logical consequences of domestic strife and alien plague in the Spring and Autumn Period. The governance of proprieties and music established on the rule of proprieties by Duke Zhou was not only invalid in its obligations for Chinese dukedoms, but eventually subdued to the hegemony of the barbarians. According to the constitutional governance of Zhou’s proprieties, “constitutional governance and military expeditions should be justified and declared by the sons of heaven”. But in the Spring and Autumn Period this principle of Zhou’s proprieties had been replaced by “constitutional governance and military expeditions are justified and declared by dukes”. Such replacement was thought to be usurpation and domestic strife. At same time, “dukedom like Qin and Jin, being adjacent to and influenced by barbarians, are prone to resort to forces,.....seduced barbarians troops from Hu and Luo in looting China several times”²¹ and “consequently the dukedoms such as Qin, Chu, Wu and Yue have converted themselves into Barbarians, for their policies are intended for becoming superpowers”.²² Such military attacks on China were called alien plague. This was the reason that a new policy had been discussed and made during Confucius’ time to resurrect the rule of Zhou’s proprieties, that was the policy of “defending the king against the barbarians” (*zunwang rangyi*), which was then proposed to justify the legitimacy of the rule of proprieties. In this particular historical and legal

¹⁹ Xian Jin, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, xianjin*).

²⁰ Yan Yuan, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, yanyuan*).

²¹ Sima Qian, “Book of the Officials in Heaven in the Historical Records (*shiji, tianguan shu*),” in *The Twenty-Four Histories* (Version of Simplified Chinese) (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 2000) Vol. 27, p. 1156.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 1154.

context that Confucius took his initiative to renovate Zhou's proprieties with humaneness as its value orientation, advocating the political and legal philosophies as the most rational and desirable rule under heaven.

Analogous to the concepts in legal philosophy, the real political and legal situations were the violations of Zhou's proprieties, that what "Is" was. In order to remedy this illegal and unjustified political situation, Confucius, as a smart political idealist, proposed a political agenda that "if individual selfish profits are constrained, the world under the heaven will be united in the principle of humaneness". To his understanding that previous dynasties had been witnessing the rule of proprieties with respective emphasis on Heavenly Worship (*Xia Dynasty*), on Memorizing Ancestor's Ghosts (*Shang Dynasty*) and on Human Virtue or Proprieties (*Zhou Dynasty*), now there must be what "Ought" was for him, and he saw "Ought" as the value orientation to salvage Zhou's proprieties from being violated by "Is". In his optimistic political and legal scheme "Ought" stands for humaneness to enrich and strengthen the rule of proprieties in Zhou's "Is" situations. In his volition to create in the form of narrating the previous tradition, Confucius introduced into Zhou's proprieties his reflections on humaneness and righteousness, being acknowledged as 'the advocacy of humaneness and righteousness' (*gui renyi*) and the pursuit of universal ethics. Since universe in Confucian tradition is the enlarged concept inferred from family and country, Confucius contrived three concepts, respectively for this consecutive ideological space from family to country and then to universe or the world under heaven with filial piety for family, loyalty for country, and righteousness(or humanness and righteousness) for universe. For Confucius, the base and objective of proprieties is humaneness, which may express itself respectively as filial piety, loyalty, and righteousness at different social levels. In his political logic, filial piety is the moral resource to establish a family; and when it being transferred to country, such filial piety transforms into loyalty which is prerequisite to ruling a country legitimately and effectively, and again when being transformed into righteousness, such filial piety acquired universal promise to harmonize the world for eternity. Therefore we may conclude that filial piety is the basic concept employed by Confucius in his expounding political constitution with family ethics.

When being asked why not undertaking politics, Confucius explained in the origin of politics as "In *the Book of History* we have these sentences that filial piety is seen in respects towards parents and in friendship for brothers. If these moral principles are properly applied in family, politics is thus being administered. If not, what is the sense of politics?"²³ To Confucius, politics means promoting and applying values cultivated at family relations to society, since a country is nothing more than an enlarged family. So Confucian scholars categorized five basic types of relations in human society, that is, the relation between father and son by biological DNA, the relation between king and his subject by administrative commitments, the relation between husband and wife by differential family

²³ Wei Zheng, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, weizheng*).

role, the relation between elder and younger brothers by birth time order, and the relation among friends by faithful devotion. These five relations are both expressive of family ethics and their corresponding legal rights, revealing the legal philosophy typical of Confucian ethics. The authors of *The Book of Proprieties (lijì)* expounded such legal philosophy in that “Filial piety is expected from son much the same as kind generosity from father; respect is expected from younger brother much the same as good wish from elder brother; being faithful to husband is expected from wife much the same as marriage commitment from husband; obedience to the senior is expected from the junior much the same as consideration from the senior; loyalty to monarch is expected from his subjects much the same as humaneness (*ren*) from monarch”.²⁴ These ethically oriented relations are convincingly observable both in family and in society for their being balanced between power and responsibility, and between rights and obligations. When father has power to demand filial piety from his son he has to be morally responsible to take care of his son; when monarch has power to demand loyal devotion from his subjects he has to be morally responsible to show humaneness and ethical commitments to his subjects, and so on and so forth. In these five human relations, three of which, i.e., the relations between father and son, husband and wife, and elder and younger brothers, come into the category of family ethics, and the relations between monarch and his subjects, and among friends into the category of social ethics. Yet, in the final analysis, the relations between monarch and his subjects are often analogous to that of father and son, the relations among friends that of brothers. Since a country is nothing new than an enlarged family, therefore family ethics builds up the paragon of constitutional ethics for a country. In fact, as members of Confucius’ tutorial family, his disciples frequently engaged with administrative offices among those dukedoms. You Rou, one of Confucius’ disciples engaging in politics in Dukedom Lu, explained filial piety this way: “Any person behaves the way in line with filial piety rarely violates ready-made rules; if he is free from violation he is not anticipated to revolt. A gentle person definitely knows how to live ethically both at home and in society. So filial piety stands as morally metaphysical way for all his physical beings”.²⁵ In Confucian constitutional ethics, filial piety originated at family can be developed into the principle of politicians (*jun zi wei zheng zhi dao*), guiding national constitution with ethical approach. If the order at family is maintained by conscientiously esteemed biological relations between father and son, and between elder and younger brothers, then such similar harmony can be promoted and realized in society as the relations between the son of heaven and his authorized dukes, and between dukes and his authorized barons, as well as among those noblemen. In this analogy, we are able to gain better sense of family ethics, focusing on filial piety in line with the constitutional morality building up Chinese monarchs for such a social solidity and historical duration.

²⁴ Universal Ruling, *The Book of Proprieties (lijì, liyun)* (Changsha: Yuelu Press, 1989), p. 371.

²⁵ Xue Er, *The Analects of Confucius (lunyu, xue er)*.

In the three categories of family ethics, brotherhood is the one most cogently expressive of fairness and equity, which was employed naturally by Confucian ecumenism in the spirit of ‘all persons within the four seas are brothers’. As for the category of husband and wife, the Confucian ethics is often attested in ‘husband leading wife’, ‘male role in social life while female at family chores’ and ‘once married to chicken, live with chicken; once married to dog, live with dog’, obviously constraining wives their social rights simply by their sex despite the casual admonishment of mutual respect between husband and wife by some Confucian gentleperson. The most vulnerable category of family ethics is the one relating to father and son. Since the role of father in the family is defined as ‘family chief or familychieftain’ (*jiazhang*), he monopolies an absolute power above average right among family members. In the biological sense, parents also entitle mother the equal power as father, but such an equal power has been subjugated to father in the category of relations between husband and wife. And this subjugation is better enunciated in the term *hero*, which naturally denotes male; when referring to female, Chinese do not have the word ‘heroine’, instead Chinese word in such case turns out to be ‘female hero’ (*nüyingxiong*). I think gender discrimination in ancient society was rather prevailing as we read Plato saying that he was fortunately born a male instead of a female, for his philosophy also reveals a religious clue for special life right exclusive to the male citizen. To Confucian ideology, the political constitution of a country must be manipulated like a family of which the country is its enlarged copy, so a country must be controlled by a country father or country chief similar to a father in a family. And this family–country (*jiaguo*) model facilitates the Chinese in their coining a term of country leader as country-father (*junfu* or *guofu*), and people in the country as the country-son (*zimin*). Such a mind-set also influenced Chinese intellectuals in their modern translation regarding the term ‘chosen people’ in Christian tradition, a term mistakenly put into Chinese as ‘God’s son’. In any case, the category of father and son in the family ethics is the most unfair one at the cost of the son’s right, but has been the necessary link in family maintaining.

But this unfair yet necessary relation between father and son has constituted a hereditary and stereotyped ‘family chief monopoly’ in the family ethics, which has been developed into ‘monarch dictatorship’ in an enlarged family, i.e., the country. In many circumstances, monarch dictators in Chinese imperial history simply take the common wealth of the country as the family benefit relative to their own kinsmen. When one reads Chinese historical documents each dynasty in Chinese history is often described as the power belonging to certain family, such as Liu Han for the Han Dynasty, Li Tang for the Tang Dynasty, Zhao Song for the Song Dynasty, etc. This special constitutional terminology shows the worst possible consequence that family chief model could trigger off, fulfilling the individual desire for power at the cost of public interest for universal rights. For this encroachment on universal rights of subjects as country-son, Confucius proposed a moral mechanism to constrain monarch power: “Ji Kangzi asked for comments to his policy, ‘how about my policy to make people respect and loyal to my power?’ Confucius replied: ‘if you behave yourself gracefully towards people, then they

will respect you; if you treat them like your family member, i.e., showing your own filial piety towards the aged and tender care towards the young, they will return with their loyalties; if you appoint persons by their merits and help educate the illiterate, people under your rule will encourage each other with great diligence' ”.²⁶ Ji Kangzi was the most powerful prime minister in Dukedom Lu at Duke Ai Gong's term, he approached the filial piety only from the power perspective by demanding his subjects loyalty and respect to him like sons to their father and younger to elder brother. So Confucius rectified his preconceived notion on filial piety, stating that the minister's power is conditioned by his decent service towards his subordinates and their obligations towards their superiors are balanced by the latter's respect to the former's rights, and the ruler must perform himself in the spirit of filial piety before he is eligible to ask for loyalty from his subordinates. Zhu Xi fully understood Confucius in his explaining on loyalty that “loyalty means performing one's duty in its fullest extent”, all persons including ruler and subjects are equally responsible for their positions. And ‘encourage’, in Confucian sense, is not to exercise administrative power over the subordinates by means of praise or punishment, but rather the application of moral equality in the belief that ‘all human beings have equal hearts, all hearts have similar functions in reflection’. By appointing by merits and educating the illiterate, Confucius highlighted universal social rights for the subordinates by imposing moral responsibilities on administrative powers of dukes and ministers, implicitly stressing equal rights in terms of human rational faculty to learn and attain merits. His advocacy for equal rights in the area of education and service appointment prioritized universal morality over administrative power, restricting those with powers in superior ranks by ‘ought’, i.e., they ought appoint by merits, and educate the illiterate and in general ought to do their utmost in bringing up their children-subjects. Superficially, encouragement is often thought of as the exercise of administrative power, but Confucius managed to reveal its moral essence as way to justify the person in powerful position that he ‘ought’ respect his subjects as his rational fellow beings, seeing to it that they have full and fair moral and legal rights to participate in politics. Such legal balance between administrative power at hands of those high rank guys and the moral responsibilities towards their subordinates was explicitly stated by Confucian scholars in the Song Dynasty: “There is universal rule for all beings on the Earth. For being a father, his rule is defined in being benevolent to his children; for being a child, his rule filial to his parents; for a country leader his rule humanistic to his subjects; for being a subject, his rule respectful to his leader. This balance between power and right, and between obligation and responsibility constitute the universal consummation for human endeavor to halt at. Abiding by or violating this rule will bring about either benefit or disaster. If a Saint can govern all beings or things harmoniously, he just follows this universal rule instead

²⁶ Wei Zheng, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, weizheng*).

of creating any rule of his own initiative”.²⁷ In the parallel to natural laws governing all universal fellow beings, the social relations between king and his subjects, and father and son are naturally governed by social regulations and ethical laws, ‘being justified’ is thus introduced to constrain the power holder by moral ‘ought’, which guarantees order and harmony for family, society and natural world. For lack of such moral ‘ought’, power holder will unilaterally boost his power to the extent as British statesman Lord Acton’s ‘Power corrupts, absolute power corrupts absolutely’. Suspicious of the power boosting unchecked, Confucian scholars insist on the dialectical balance between power and responsibility as well as right and obligation in family establishing, country ruling and world harmonizing, concentrating especially on the moral awareness of power holders.

Loyalty (*zhong*) as Constitutional Norm for Country

In the historical context in which Confucian ideology was being formed, the dukedoms Confucius visited and served in the capacity of an international political adviser were much similar to the modern nation-states, constituted by various administrative units under ministers, subordinate to which were the congregations of individual family as basic social cell, or the powerful and hereditary clans in the nation-states. However, at family level in the Spring and Autumn Period filial piety was the pivot to get all members united, and when raised to state or dukedom level, filial piety was further improved as the virtue of loyalty, i.e., ‘the shift from filial piety to loyalty’ (*yixiao zuozhong*). So in the Han Dynasty immediately following the Zhou Dynasty when Confucius and Mencius lived in its late years, the imperial civil service was accompanied with such administrative regulations as ‘appoint loyal offices by choosing persons with filial piety’, ‘being filial and prudent as the qualifications for social celebrities and government officials’, mirroring Confucian reflections on filial piety that “he is not filial when residing without grace; he is not filial when serving his duke without loyalty; he is not filial when meeting his superior officials without respect; he is not filial when treating his friends without faithfulness; he is not filial when fighting without bravery”.²⁸ These explanations done on filial piety were the reflections on social and political dimensions based on its ethical principles in the family context.

Since loyalty is indicative of political and social functions expansively derived from family ethics, it no longer subjects itself to a family chief, but serves as higher authority identical to a country chief. When Chinese saying ‘be loyal to’ or ‘demonstrate total loyalty towards’, they mean to cherish ‘public country’ to

²⁷ Zhu Xi, Lu Zuqian and Jiang Yong, “Annotations to Current Reflections (*jinsilu jizhu*,” in *The Four Categories in Chinese Cultural Essentials* (*sibu jingyao*) (Shanghai: Shanghai Classic Press, 1993), Vol. 12, chapt. 8, p. 1171.

²⁸ The Rituals, *The Book of Proprieties* (*lij, jiyi*) (Changsha: Yuelu Press, 1989), p. 469.

'individual family', being aware of the distinction between 'to be filial at family' (*jinxiao zaijia*) and 'to be loyal in country' (*gongzhong tiguao*). To their perception 'public servant' and 'country ruler' are chiefs in an enlarged social family, that is why Chinese has these terms as 'chief official', 'father-mother official' or 'monarch father', insinuating that loyalty towards these officials in country is what filial piety towards parents at family.

For self-realization, Confucian scholars proposed these well-arranged circumstances from family cradle to community, society, country and world, facilitating him in the process of becoming from 'family person', to 'country person' and to 'heaven person'. A heaven person is a 'world citizen' serving the universal interests for all people under heaven and having realized the universal concept of a perfect person. Therefore, filial commitment at family level is preparatory for serving a country and ruling the world, its ideal and political objective being gradually amplified and transcended as to the sphere of 'cosmic personality' and 'grand harmony' exhibited in 'universal beings originated from one onto, world from one family and China from one person'. If the milieu cultivating a person shifts from family to country, the life ethic should accordingly lift from being filial to being loyal; if that milieu is amplified from country to world under heaven, the life ethic should again be elevated from loyalty to righteousness. Therefore loyalty is paralleled to the filial piety toward country and righteousness filial piety toward world under heaven. This is the life ethic and political philosophy generalized from Confucian scholars in their life process and personality cultivation with creative spirit and self realization. Zi Zhang, a disciple of Confucius, asked the definition for 'accomplished personality', Confucius demanded his apprehension for the term first before he could expatiate on it. Zi Zhang thus claimed: an accomplished personality "is realized by reputation both on a donated land and in a country". Confucius seriously disagreed with this explanation by discrediting his disciple's claim: "To establish one's reputation falls short of an accomplished personality. To my observation, an accomplished personality is the unity between integrity and righteousness, being considerate of others by feeling honestly their situations. So the person attaining such personality commands popular admiration and respect both on a donated land and in a country. If a person only aims at fame and vainglory, he could pretend to be benevolent but act otherwise in the spirit of narcissism. His reputation is thus confined both on a donated land and in a country".²⁹ From the angle of the disciple, both donated land and country remained pure milieu for vainglory, seeing nothing of ethical connotations in the surroundings fostering and cultivating human beings. His instrumental suggesting donated land and country to the backdrop for pure fame smeared the ethical message permeated in human constitutional communities. Confucius criticized this utilitarian instrumentalism as 'vainglory' than 'accomplishment'. In his evaluation, 'accomplishment' is the pursuit of benevolence and righteousness, and Confucius took it as criterion for scholars to accept service invitations from the

²⁹ Yan Yuan, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, yanyuan*).

dukes or the emperor, in agreement with Confucian political ethics such as ‘an accomplished personality is attained only by benefiting all under the heaven’ and ‘a country without accomplished personality lacks national morality’, and these are the succinct enunciations to filial piety in its employments of social context and political feats.

Loyalty as Political Norm for Nation

The concept of filial piety, when being developed and transformed from family to country, turns into the concept of loyalty, the transcendental sense in its ethics being shifted from family oriented to society oriented. This shift has been highly evaluated by Confucian scholars as realizing greater values of filial piety in concept of loyalty, not being simply replacing one concept by another at different levels. When popular sayings go this way as “There has been no wise policy to balance filial piety and loyalty” (*zigu zhongxiao nan liangquan*) and “Loyalty is always realized at the cost of filial piety” (*yixiao zuozhong*). I am here, theoretically safe, to notify that such conclusions are limited in ‘zero and one’ methodology to the negligence that they can be mutually promoting and complementary. Even such sayings reflecting ideological stereotypes in traditional rule of proprieties, we can still work out with harmonious solutions from Confucian moral rights and constitutional Confucianism.

According to Confucian ethical and political philosophy, scholar should be encouraged to charge into society, applying his administrative talents nursed as virtue for a family member to its greater extent. By such transforming of role from family member to social activist or imperial subject, he should naturally accomplish what he has nursed as filial piety at family to administrative loyalty in society as an enlarged family, being fully conscientious that they are congenial in essence. And such self conscientiousness was, in fact, expressed by one of Confucius’ disciple Zeng Zi in “I always engage myself in rethinking daily for these three questions: Have I accomplished loyalty when serve at administrative? Have I accomplished being faithful when making friends with others? Have I accomplished being versatile when learning from my tutor?”³⁰ To the concept of loyalty, I would rather associate it with the motives of Confucius and his disciples in their political travels among those dukedoms, they were certainly motivated to make political and administrative advices to those dukes to achieve their own political ambitions. But Confucians distinguished themselves strikingly from the Legalists who confine their professions just as instrumental advisors, they meant to be the spiritual advisors to monarchs, or to be the spiritual tutors of kings or monarchs (*xianzhe wei diwangshi*). When they maintain the political quality as loyal subject, they are not ready to sacrifice the principle of humaneness, which require that

³⁰ Xue Er, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, xue er*).

loyalty would not contradict righteousness despite it being developed and promoted from filial piety. For Confucius was very much particular about the unity that integrated filial piety, loyalty and righteousness when discussing service at administrative office for barons, dukedoms or kings. He never resigned himself to unprincipled loyalty to those in high positions or in administrative powers, always consciously guarding his independent moral right from being degraded into political or legal instrument to administrative powers. He also employed Tao (identical to Dao) or Way in expressing the political legitimacy in unifying filial piety, loyalty and righteousness, that is, the applicable principle and moral rights in the process of the rule of proprieties. When referring to Duke Wei Ling that “My administrative service never goes to ill-morally justified Tao”,³¹ Confucius disdained him as a duped monarch abusing Tao, shameful of both his advisor and subject. He admonished his disciples that “A subject is righteously justified in serving his king in line with Tao, or otherwise he should promptly resign his post”.³² This is the priority of service for Tao over service for Food, by which Confucius advocated his political and legal philosophies, restricting loyalty in line of the rule of proprieties to avoid human moral rights being polluted by administrative powers. For the lofty motive of popular rights, Confucius formulated these principles for himself as well as disciples when serving for administrative powers: “What is obtained by intelligence instead of moral humaneness will eventually lose; what is obtained by intelligence and maintained by humaneness yet not earnestly administered and righteously mobilized for the ruled will also fail short of perfect office”.³³ His reflections on the popular moral rights and constitution reveals what he believes as the principles and aims of administration in connection with value orientation in humaneness contrasted to administrative instrumentalism which will definitely fail of its own accord for lack of moral legitimacy. The powers or positions even of being legitimately obtained would not remain stable and effective if not being earnestly performed. Therefore loyalty expected from the subjects for monarch or administration in the rule of proprieties is subjectively conditioned with those in high positions or with administrative powers who must respect and be considerate of moral rights and decent personality of those without administrative resources. Such relations between those with administrative powers and those without are fairly maintained by full conscience of universal moral rights, instead of unilateral loyalty obligated from the subjects. And this implication by Confucius’ investigations into traditional rule of proprieties in association with moral rights can also be traced to some insights of the writers or compilers of Zhou’s proprieties: “If not justified by (Zhou’s) proprieties, laws or legalities would not be applied and observed gracefully either in civil or military administration”.³⁴ Parallel to the statements in the west regarding modern western jurisprudence that the rule of

³¹ Wei Ling Gong, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, weilinggong*).

³² Xian Jin, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, xianjin*).

³³ Wei Ling Gong, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, weilinggong*).

³⁴ Qu Li, *The Book of Proprieties* (*lijì, quli*) (Changsha: Yuelu Press, 1989), p 279.

law must integrate the sacred justice with secular compulsion, we may do justice to Confucian legal philosophy in constructing a moral-right rule of proprieties to confine the political and legal administrations in their powers even in demanding loyalties from the subjects or the ruled.

From both the perspective of proprieties and their value orientations, the Confucian scholars proposed their social service under the condition that they should be respected as ‘accomplished personality’ or ‘cosmic personality’ with full self-initiative and political idealism rather than being pure power brokers for dukes. Their idealism is sort of moral restrictions on their clients in the principle of balancing power with responsibility for dukes or those in power. But people in power often neglect this dialectical relation, mistaking power itself as administrative subject. For instance, Duke Lu Ding asked Confucius: “How should the ruler employ the services of his subjects? And how should a subject serve his ruler?” Confucius answered, “The ruler should employ the services of his subjects in accordance with the proprieties. A subject should serve his ruler by principle of loyalty”.³⁵ Here we see the Confucian emphasis on the balance between ruler’s responsibility towards proprieties and his subjects’ obligation towards loyalty, no absolute power or service being unilaterally justified. For the violation of proprieties by powerful nobles Ji family, Confucius condemned him severely, “They use eight rows of eight dancers each to perform in their courtyard. If they brave such violation of proprieties, is there anything else they could refrain from doing?”³⁶ In retrospect, there have been popular chats and social complaints on ‘the violations of heaven’s mandates’ by rulers or governments, which are just justified by Confucian principle of benevolence to distinguish devoted subjects and evil flatterers, as well as cooping up power by proprieties. Therefore Confucius advocated not only the confinement of power by proprieties but also the prerequisite to loyal service to rulers in terms of proprieties. To think of such policy employed by Confucian scholars in the Spring and Autumn Period that they ‘openly refused to obey the ruler or dukes by sticking to proprieties’ (*fenting kangli*), and in the Warring States Period Mencius proposed ‘despising powers by moral rights’ (*yide kangwei*) and the plebeian social revolts in Chinese history under the slogan of ‘performing the political mission in Heaven’s stead’ (*titian xingdao*), these are the political and legal echoes to Confucius’ ‘serving the king by cosmic righteousness’ and ‘cooping up power by proprieties’. Now a better understanding is hereby provided to the Confucian principle of ‘loyalty and filial piety’ (*zhongxiao*) that universal moral rights are introduced to counterbalance the administrative power to rule subjects, the public moral rights expressive of universal benevolence being the vital counterbalance to selfish administrative power expressive of rulers’ exclusive interests. Such a political and legal philosophies justified Confucius in his frequent fleeing from his native Dukedom Lu and his political persuasions in Dukedoms of Qi, Wei, Chen and Cai, and Mencius was equally justified in the same spirit to shuttle among

³⁵ BaYi, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, ba yi*).

³⁶ *Ibid.*

many dukedoms, disseminating his ideas of ‘sharing happiness with people’ (*yumintongle*) and criticizing the political monopolizing the public benefits for selfish individual powerful family in the spirit of ‘undertaking universal missions by gentleman’s initiative.’

Righteousness (*yi*) as the–Norm–for International Relations

Righteousness or ethical-cosmic commitment is the principle expressive of proprieties in the world under heaven, so the terms are identical in Confucian classics or documents as doctrinal Dao (*daoyi*), Ritual Justice (*liyi*) or Humane Righteousness (*renyi*), these are metaphysical entities in Confucian ethics or politics concerning the concept of proprieties. We are familiar with Confucius in his enduing worship for Duke Zhou, who was believed to have created new types of Zhou’s proprieties on his critical assessing previous proprieties. The reason might be that, for a political and legal philosopher, Confucius considered Zhou’s proprieties to be metaphysically ethical entity by stating that “Duke Zhou assessed the merits and demerits of proprieties in the previous two dynasties, accomplishing a comprehensive proprieties system for the Zhou Dynasty. That’s why I am eagerly following his suit”.³⁷ Prior to the Zhou, the Xia and Shang Dynasties had different rules of proprieties. Xia had been ruled by hierarchical constitution manipulated by heaven’s mandates while Shang was administered by proprieties in religious rituals to please the ghosts of their dead ancestors. But Duke Zhou reformed their hierarchical constitutions and religious rituals, and established a new type of constitution based on humane morality. With a visible metaphysical entity, Zhou’s proprieties transcended the rule of proprieties in the previous two dynasties in their biological ties and administrative continuity, bringing about a new type of political and legal constitutions for all dukedoms and their dependencies, or even the barbarians in the spirit of “uniting all people under heaven into one family” (*tianxiayijia*) and “All people within the four seas are brothers and sisters”. (*sihaizhinei jie xiongdi*). So the Confucian ethics thought to be originated from Zhou’s proprieties was accepted and sustained as the core of Zhou’s proprieties to rule a harmonious world under heaven since Confucius’ lifetime.

But the actual world situation in the Spring and Autumn Period was such a chaos, that Confucius often referred to it as “the violation of proprieties and distortion of music” (*lihuai yuebeng or libeng yuehuai*), those ambitious and aggressive dukes, barons and even barbarians were actively engaged in achieving their own hegemony to reconstruct or simply replace Zhou’s proprieties. These were constitutional chaos to Confucius as he observed during his years of political and pedagogical journeys among many of Chinese dukedoms. He sharply

³⁷ Ba Yi, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, ba yi*).

criticized such chaos as the blatant violations of Zhou's proprieties, such as "proprieties, music and military expeditions are now being made by dukes instead of the sons of heaven at central administration", "subjects are usurping the duke's powers" and even "the plebeians are engaged in grabbing at administrative powers by all means except proprieties". He estimated these political and constitutional attempts as the evil maneuvers of narrow-minded persons morally polluted by political and legal utilitarianism. They should be disgraced and prohibited from lofty-minded scholars aiming at righteousness in international relations. His popularly quoted assessment is this "Noble-minded person is vindicated by righteousness, while narrow-minded person by benefits".³⁸ To him, if not adequately grounded by his frequent failures to convince those ambitious dukes with Zhou's proprieties, righteousness should be the universal norm to be valid in the world under heaven, while immediate benefits may only allure those guys identical to dog-chicken thieves. His observations were later explained by another Confucian administrator that "guys allured by immediate benefits always have similar personalities in being selfish".³⁹ So it would not be too difficult for us to realize that the distinction between being lofty-minded and narrow-minded made by Confucius is one of ethical evaluation, with universal righteousness superior to selfish benefits. To remedy the chaos in the international relations, Confucius persistently advocated the doctrinal righteousness vindicated in lofty-minded scholars or politicians. For him righteousness would never be better witnessed by person with moral rights and administrative powers, his morality is demonstrated by his administration and this harmonious integration between moral rights and administrative powers, between ideas and actions certainly testifies doctrinal righteousness in administrative regulations. Confucius himself never had chance to see the application of his moral and legal philosophy, but its value has been inherited as political and legal assets for Chinese nation.

As one of the leading contemporary new Confucian scholars, Prof. Mou Zongsan once commented this way: "Humaneness is the principle of both proprieties and music, suggesting their transcendent principle. That is to say, humaneness carries the true sense of proprieties and music as social norms. That is why Confucius stressing 'If not guided by humaneness, can any person behave himself in accordance with proprieties? If not guided by humaneness, can any person behave himself in accordance with music?' If not guided by the principle of humaneness, what is the point in rituals of dance and music? The superficial ceremonies were nothing essential but a complete fabrication".⁴⁰ By first impression the proprieties of Zhou did focus on the principle of 'ruling by musical rituals', simply because the musical rituals were the traditional ways of living like pleading for rich harvest and

³⁸ Li Ren, *The Analects of Confucius*. (*lunyu, li ren*).

³⁹ Ouyang Xiu and Song Qi, "Biography of Li Jiang in New History of the Tang Dynasty (*xixiangshu, lijiang zhuan*)," in *The Twenty-Four Histories* (Version of Simplified Chinese) (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 2000) Vol. 152, p. 3785.

⁴⁰ Mou Zongsan, *Nineteen Lectures on Chinese Philosophy* (Shanghai: Shanghai Classic Press, 1997), p. 52.

celebrating important events by musical dancing, they had been observed as social norms in daily lives by ordinary people. Comparing with traditional rules and regulations in the west such rules of musical rituals saved large Chinese population from apprehending more complicated and stereotyped edicts, articles or religious precepts feasible only by much literacy, faculty and institution. What had been the faculties of churches and priests as well as courts and judges were performed and functioned by family and its heads as well as country and its monarchs. The social life secular yet non-legitimate under the Chinese rule of musical rituals is the silent integration between ‘fairness’ and ‘righteousness’, rather contrary to its seemingly lack of justice in principle and love in objective. Epistemologically ancient Chinese acknowledged the principles of ‘humane righteousness’ or ‘humane love’ as the metaphysical Dao guiding their lives in social observance. With this Dao or metaphysical principles, musical rituals were conscientiously observed as feasible and sustained social norms. Therefore Confucius’ suspicious request for humane-ness in the rule of musical rituals insinuated his confirmation on humane principle as the core value for such social norms.

Committed by ‘undertaking universal missions by gentleman’s initiative’, Confucius set up for himself the metaphysical principle above the actual political situations in his life time, unsatisfied with those politicians like Duke Qi Jing, Duke Lu Ding, Duke Wei Ling, or Duke Chu Zhao and their power brokers as well. That is why Confucius abandoned his political careers in many dukedoms wandering from one dukedom to another in constant setbacks. In a dimension of modern international relations, the constitutions in the periphery barbarians were inferior to those of central Chinese dukedoms among which Dukedom Qi and Dukedom Lu were the mainstay of Chinese political constitutions, they were the donated dukedoms of two founding fathers of the Zhou Dynasty, i.e., Duke Jiang Tai for Qi and Duke Zhou for Lu. But from the perspective of metaphysical Dao or Tao, i.e., the principle of human righteousness, they all came under the category of physical politics. Thus Confucius commented that “Qi could attain to the state of Lu by reform, and Lu to the state of Dao by reform”.⁴¹ Dao in Confucian political philosophy symbolized the supreme principle of ‘heaven’s righteousness’, and Confucius cherished it as dynamics and orientation for dukedom constitutions as well as the principle for Confucius in accepting administrative and diplomatic service positions among dukedoms.

In the perspective of politics and international relations in the Spring and Autumn Period, righteousness revealed in the two most important events, i.e., religious ceremonies and military expeditions, implies what scale and sword symbolize in the rule of law, scale for sacred justice and sword for secular obligation. So modern concept of law-state, or *rechtsstaat*, could hold water only in combining secular obligation with sacred justice. But for Confucian rule of proprieties in ancient China, thinkers distinguished themselves from modern legal philosophers in the west in that they were enthusiastic about sacred justice

⁴¹ BaYi, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, ba yi*).

revealed in their religious rituals, as we read from Confucius that “I am more willing to learn religious rituals than military techniques”.⁴² His disciple expounded his legal philosophy in line with religious rituals by saying that “religious rituals performed are for social morality only”.⁴³ His volitions associated with civilian morality incubation under the auspices of religious rituals were equally exposed in his statement of ruling the country and the world under the heaven: “When being asked the religious ceremonies performed by the son of heaven, Confucius responded by saying that I am not proper to answer, but I can tell that who understands the ceremony can rule the world as easily as he turns his palm up and down”.⁴⁴ If religious ceremony is performed to secure national morality, then the rule of proprieties is also identical to the rule of virtue (*dezhi*), both of which have the universal fairness and justice wrought out from religious performances. In the Confucian frame of rule of proprieties, we are frequently told that politics armed with humaneness is invincible and the ruling the world as easy as playing one palm. But contrary to Confucius, his peers in Militants and Legalists held the opposite viewpoints that only instruments as weaponry and administrative techniques free of value were the most effective in ruling the world.

Disappointed at both Duke Lu Ding in his being female beauty addict and the usurpation of powerbroker Yang Huo, Confucius began his political gypsy from one dukedom to another amid anxieties and distresses. He was once invited as his chief political adviser by Duke Qi Jing, the ruler of the most powerful dukedom at the time, and then treated with intentional humiliation. In Dukedom Chen, he was firstly invited as honored guest and soon after was declared unwelcome. When he visited Dukedom Wei, Duke Wei Ling simply lorded it over him. Eventually Confucius was unfairly grumbled by his disciples by his meeting with the notorious Mistress of Duke Wei Ling, Nan Zi. In his visit to Dukedom Song, Confucius scrapped narrowly a scheduled murder by powerful minister Sima Huantui in Dukedom Song. When stranded between Dukedoms of Chen and Cai, Confucius was exposed to the plots of their malignant ministers. And eventually he came on to the possibility to move into the barbarian Dukedoms of Jin and Chu, and in extreme destitution he, on several occasions, discussed the possible situation to float on the sea, or simply migration into the barbarian areas distant from central Chinese dukedoms. The challenges remained so harsh for him as the adaptation to the rituals of alien dukedoms or barbarian customs despite his commitment “to transform the alien rituals and barbarian customs” (*yifeng yisu*). On one hand he was always devoted to his political idealism, on the other he had to comprise his idealism with some alien or barbarian rituals. In his risky journeys, “he often rushed to the calls of dukes without respectfully dispatched vehicles,”⁴⁵ violating the forms of proprieties that a saint should be welcomed by dispatched vehicles.

⁴² Wei Ling Gong, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, wei ling gong*).

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Xiang Dang, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, xiang dang*).

When being reproached for his political advice in such impolite way of asking, Confucius was often thrown into embarrassment that “I am frequently mistaken for flattery when complying with dukes in their political consultancies”.⁴⁶ For his constant escapes from his mother dukedom in the hope to convince other dukes his political philosophy, he offered his dialectical explanation: “It is flattery to contribute to the ghosts of other’s ancestors; and it is open cowardice not to commit oneself to righteousness”.⁴⁷ Since religious service to the ghost of one’s ancestor was one of the chief items in the rule of proprieties, so to contribute sacrifice to alien spirits was the token for political and moral flattery. Nevertheless Confucius insisted on the transcendental value expressed in righteousness above all forms of proprieties, justifying his 14 years of absence from his mother dukedom in suspicion of serving alien dukes rather than performing religious service for his own ghosts of ancestry. To brave the conventional censure for his absence in religious service by conducting political advocacies in foreign dukedoms, Confucius developed a concept of moral courage that invalidated his obligation to abide by rules of convention or customary laws, which served as the symbol of righteousness superior to loyalty in one’s own dukedom and religious service to one’s ancestry. And this concept of moral courage advocated by Confucius is now employed as the motto of Chinese national anthem today.

Whether to comply with ‘international righteousness’ or not was the prerequisite to Confucius in his decision to leave or stay in a dukedom, being his apprehension of conforming oneself with the rule of proprieties. But in the Spring and Autumn Period, most dukedoms did not rule according to proprieties, instead they resorted to military forces than proprieties, conducting their despotic politics on the pretext of ‘respecting monarch and resisting barbarians’ (*zunwang rangyi*) and ‘manipulating other dukes by directives of a captured heaven’s son or monarch’ (*xie tianzi yi ling zhuhou*). Such were the situations that Confucius was worried as ‘the violations of proprieties and the spoils of music’ (*lihuai yuebeng ro lebeng yuehuai*) and depicted in great dismay by Confucius’ disciple Zi Lu: “The only reason for a Confucian scholar taking his administrative service is to translate principles of righteousness in society. But now we come to realize that righteous Dao was no longer worshipped and observed”.⁴⁸ But such confusing context did not deterred him from adhering to international righteousness in ‘prioritizing rituals to arms’, and when Duke Wei Ling consulted him on ‘military affairs’, Confucius chose to leave Dukedom Wei the next day. Upon hearing Nankuo Shi, one of his disciple as well as the husband of his niece, commenting on the unpredictable fatalities inflicting on the inventors of combating arrows and ships, Yi the Father of Arrow and Ao the Father of Warship, Confucius did not hesitate in praising him as “a gentleperson motivated by virtues”. The principle of righteousness ideally applicable in international relations was concretely interpreted as

⁴⁶ BaYi, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, ba yi*).

⁴⁷ Wei Zheng, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, wei zheng*).

⁴⁸ Wei Zi, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, wei zi*).

“When confrontation occurs between Chinese and distant barbarian dukedoms, we should advocate virtual principle to attract them. If they accept the virtual principle, we should dearly cherish their response for peace and comforting them friendly”. Should other policy introduced rather than virtual policy, “the distant barbarian dukedoms would not accept your principle and remain aggressive, our dukedoms in central China could easily fall into bankruptcy. If the internal policy among central dukedoms are designed by arms, I would pessimistically be worried about the fate of Ji Sun, whose power is vulnerable to internal turmoil than to its foreign dependency Zhuan Yu”.⁴⁹ ‘Virtual principle’ meant the merits of rite, arms the ultimate self-invited destruction, Confucius therefore made clear his reflections on international relations that the vital risk for a dukedom was coming more directly from the internal policy violating international righteousness rather than the foreign aggression and sabotage.

In international relations regulated by the principle of righteousness, Confucius was ready and happy to administer politics in advocating for popular moral rights and humaneness-oriented constitution. He expressed his political and legal philosophies in the sentence that “a lofty-minded person approaches monarchs under heaven in no personal preference except it being agreeable with righteousness”.⁵⁰ For all secular positions and powers, Confucius had no predilection, he admitted political justifications only in line with righteousness, and he stuck to such way of living in “persevering in knowledge accumulation and in moral politics, avoiding dangerous dukedoms and fleeing away from disordered dukedoms”.⁵¹ Though he was chased as a stray dog in his life time when China was plagued with various wars unjustified by righteousness, the political and legal philosophies focusing on humaneness and righteousness proposed by Confucius has been remaining spiritual companions to Chinese nation.

Conclusion

To renew the traditional concept of proprieties into one with ethical orientation as humaneness (*ren*) is to establish the rule of proprieties by stressing universal equity and moral rights, and this can be appreciated as Confucius’ great contribution to Chinese politics and law. The rule of proprieties in the Chinese tradition is thus representing the integration among the Confucian scholars as imperial moral advisors, the legalists as positive advocates for imperial powers and emperors, and his administrative officials as the political and legal performers comprising Confucian reflections on proprieties with Legalist’s advocacies on utilizing powers. Since the rule of proprieties has been popularly acknowledged as

⁴⁹ Ji Shi, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunu, jishi*).

⁵⁰ Li Ren, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, li ren*).

⁵¹ Tai Bo, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, taibo*).

the rule of law with Chinese characteristics, Confucian cosmology with value orientation exhibits the feature of natural law theory when being applied in constructing Chinese legal system. This naturally gave rise to Confucian sustained reflections on the rule of proprieties intellectual dominance, which was also succinctly abbreviated as the Way of Politics and Law (*zhengdao or zhidao*). Under the Confucian dominance, the methodology in the rule of proprieties has been understood as the metaphysical Way or Dao in integrating the values among filial piety in family, monarchal loyalty in the country and righteousness, or universal commitment in the world under heaven as well as physical Instrument or Qi in achieving the attainments in setting up family, ruling a country and family establishing, country ruling and world harmonizing (*qijia zhiguo pingtianxia*). The dialectics expressed in “A motivated mind should never be confined by instrumental attainments” and “A nobly-minded person is identical with Way or Dao all the time” by Confucius has been forming Chinese ideology in guiding their politics and justice both in civil service examinations and explanatory applications to legal articles for more than 2000 years. Even in today’s provincial administrations we still have promotion regulations excluding those who violated filial piety and 20 % deduction in criminal sentence will be tempered with mercy for the convicted who is caught by the clues initiated by his or her own relatives. These political and legal devices all have been suggested and activated by Confucius in his innovations on the rule of proprieties. His philosophy on proprieties addressed the paramount significance of rest (*zhi*), that is, human politics and social regulations can only rest at being perfect. His intentions are revealing that all human beings is endowed with unalienable moral rights, and administrative and monarchal powers must rest at or be limited at the point of violating such fair and equal moral rights. Such a rest is the active restrictions on powers and positive affirmations on moral rights by the Confucian metaphor that Mountains are expected as high as high can be and Boulevards as spectacular as spectacular can be, so the limitless expectations are setting up metaphysical restrictions on the self-empowered physical mountains and boulevards, being eternal spiritual attractions for climbers and hikers. So at both family and country levels, country (*guojia*) as a Chinese term meaning the unity between family and dukedom ruled by Zhou’s proprieties rather than modern sense of a nation state, Confucian advocated moral rights in renovating Zhou’s proprieties also set up moral restrictions upon both powers of fathers and monarchial kings, for they were expected as the kindest fathers and the most humanistic kings. Such highest expectations connected with moral rights identical to cosmopolitan dynamics were schemed to remind the owners of power as fathers and kings their responsibilities to safeguard the universal moral rights of their sons and subjects. Therefore Confucian advocacy on the rule of proprieties strikes a proper balance between the power of father in demanding filial piety and the moral right of son in expecting the kindest as well as the power of king in demanding loyalty and the moral rights of his subject in expecting the most humanistic, thus raising the awareness of moral rights and confinement of administrative power to an unprecedented high level, by which we can have a more cogent sense of what Confucius believed to be the spiritual root of politics and law.

Since Confucius had been worshipped as a perfect human tutor contrasted to the would-be perfect son of heaven before the 1911 Revolution to finish the imperial tradition of China, he was inaccurately apprehended as the intellectual guardian of imperial power. Yet through my investigation and analysis he should be reevaluated in fact as the sophisticated critic of imperial power for ardently proposing universal moral rights. Like his modern enlightenment thinkers in the west who based their human rights on divine endowments to constitutionally restrict governmental powers, Confucius based his rule of proprieties on universal moral rights as to restrict the powers of monarchs or kings. Confucius did advocate the devotion to monarchs or kings, but his tacit motive was expressed in “devotion to monarchs under the condition of maintaining moral rights” (*yidao shijun*) and “the rule of monarchs towards his subjects is justified by proprieties” (*jun shichen yi li*). These insistent statements of Confucius meticulously serve to restrain monarchal powers by a metaphysical moral doctrine, and accordingly civilians and subjects are entitled to have freer political choice. This was why Confucius frequently fled from his country by forsaking the monarchs with “the four evils” (being cruel, despotic, usurping and grudging), “to execute his people without education is called cruelty, to demand success of his subjects or civilians without admonitions is called despotism, to exact deadlines without encouraging and promoting is called grabbing, and to donate reluctantly in small amount is called grudging”.⁵² The concept of the four evils summarized by Confucius is the moral precept to admonish monarchs in applying their powers, being restrictive to administration in essence. In his legal philosophy adhering to moral rights, Confucius stood the opposite to the utilitarian statements like “power means truth” or “evil law is law in the true sense of the word”, instead he symbolized the ancient constitutional reflections of Confucian genre.

In administering international relations in the world under heaven, the rule of proprieties is applied in demonstrating the principle of universal humanness as stated in Confucian “benefits for all families under the heaven” as against “benefits for just one imperial family”. To strive for all people instead of for monarchs in Confucian renovating the Zhou’s proprieties has cultivated a type of moral courage and multi-valued toleration in Chinese political and legal traditions that gear harmoniously into modern democracy and the rule of law, and for which contemporary China owns a great deal to Confucian advocacy in sacrificing one’s own selfish power to safeguarding the public good by rehabilitating the spoiled Zhou’s proprieties. Being justified and encouraged by Confucian advocated Dao, proprieties, righteousness or cosmically ethical commitments, Chinese people in general tend to disdain monarchs their positions and powers acquired through the violations of Dao, righteousness or proprieties, and this spiritual supremacy confirmed by universal moral rights has protected Chinese from being indulged in national chauvinism tending to be introduced by fool-hardy devotion to monarchs. When referring to contemporary Chinese policies merited with “none-hegemony”, “none-alliance” and “non-aspiration for superpowers” we cannot help being

⁵² Yao Yue, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, yao yue*).

appreciative of Confucian persistence on righteousness being melted into the rule of proprieties. Such cosmically ethical commitments equally expressed in righteousness logically prioritize universal righteousness to national selfishness which authorized the Chinese in the Tang Dynasty to accept and revolutionize Buddhism from alien India. I can also optimistically foresee, if I may be fortified with the Buddhist case in ancient China, the contemporary Chinese would successfully transplant and transform alien Marxism, market economy, democracy, and the rule of law from the west. I would further conclude all these acceptance and transformations, either spiritually, ideologically, economically, politically, or legally, from alien culture could agree harmoniously with Confucian moral-right principles and cosmically ethical commitments, forming the cultural features of Chinese nationalities, thanks to Confucius in his ethical expounding and renovating the rule of proprieties in the Spring and Autumn Period.

Chapter 18

Moral Rights and Justification of Revolution: Heart-Nature Theme of Mencius

Introduction

In the Confucian tradition symbolized by The Tao (Dao) of Confucius and Mencius, the doctrine of Mencius' Righteousness in the Paragon of Confucian Humaneness (*kongren*) and Mencian Righteousness (*mengyi*) has been associated with Heart-Nature (*xinxing*), which leads consequently to an intended personality of Confucian ethics and politics. The concept of righteousness, for Mencius, connotes the cosmological ethics under the heaven, transcending the secular powers of father in family and monarch in country under the auspices of heavenly sanctity. Such transcendence is often vindicated by Righteousness-Oriented Destruction of One's Relatives (*dayimieqin*) and The Overthrow of Government by Performing Heaven's Mandate (*titianxingdao*). The concept of Heart-Nature in Mencius is the transformation of Heaven-Mandated-Nature (*xingming*) from *the Doctrine of the Mean* (*zhongyong*), attesting to the subjectivity and ethics in Confucian epistemology and cosmology. The combination between Heart-Nature and Tao-Righteousness in Mencius reveals the universally existed moral rights and ethical obligations of human beings as well as the ethical transcendence and restrictions on secular powers of Son of Heaven, i.e. monarchs and dukes. The dialectics exposed in this relation between moral rights and its restrictions on administrative powers justifies social revolutions in case of moral rights being violated and abused by administrative powers.

Mencius' philosophy in the Confucian intellectual tradition symbolized as Confucian-Mencius' Doctrine or Tao (*kongmengzhidao*) is distinguished as Heart-Nature Scholarship (*xinxingxue*), otherwise translated as Mind-Nature Scholarship (*xinxingzhixue*). In Mencius' philosophy, Heart and Nature stand for epistemology and cosmology, respectively both featured by ethics. When claiming his own expertise, Mencius stated that "I am good at epistemology as well as cultivating my cosmic air or picking up my dynamics."¹ For Mencius, epistemology appears

¹ Gongsun Chou Shang, *The Works of Mencius* (*mengzi, gongsunchou shang*).

to be the knowing what is spoken both for one self and others, for words or language is nothing less than the echoes to one's heart, that "the function of heart is to think, nothing will be apprehended without thinking."² Except nonsense, whatever spoken from human mouth expresses definite intellectual messages, hence constituting the object of logical analysis. But for Confucian scholars, epistemology is not exclusively confined in pure arguments of logic, it has been invested with ethical qualifications as verified by Confucius in "If you do not apprehend his words, you fail to know him in his nature"³ and by Mencius in "Epistemology means to see its incompleteness in biased words, to see its fallacies in radical words, to see its being malign in evil words and to see its awkwardness in ambiguous words."⁴ Therefore, words or language in Chinese cultural context is always associated with value orientations, distinguishable of language as the means to think, or thinking tool in western intellectual tradition. Such distinctions are frequented in "Words uttered by a dying person is always morally intended", "A gentleperson never speaks ill of his alienated friend" and "Words can never be spoken accurately if not righteously justified", to list a few of them. For his second merit as being claimed good at, the air in cultivating his grand personality is the elementary cosmic matter, value-free but expressive of nature in its origin as stated by his peer thinkers such as "the universal substance under the heaven is nothing more than just air", "the cosmos is formed by air in its restless motions", "the sense of air permeated in nature", "air differs at rising and setting suns" and "the cosmic air in the intercourse of male and female subsisted by iron, tree, water, fire and soil." But air, the cosmic substance, in Mencius' cosmology, has acquired a sense of ethics, that is, the righteousness in the term of heaven-earth righteousness. By cultivating cosmic air Mencius meant to ethically enrich cosmic air by investing it with righteousness and Tao. And in this explanation, Mencius added to cosmic substance the ethical dimension in Chinese philosophy, of course mainly in Confucian philosophy. This cosmic feature can easily be deciphered in contemporary Chinese entries like "righteous air" (*yiqi*) and "Justified air" (*zhengqi*). The ethical attributes to epistemology and cosmology of Mencius, so to speak, has provided Confucian philosophy the academic coherence to integrate the Doctrine of Being Internal or Inner Saint and External or Outer King (*neishengwaiwangzhidao*) with the Heart-Nature Scholarship of Mencius. In this context, the Confucian philosophy of this world is naturally exposed to the political and legal associations between cosmically-revealed moral rights and epistemologically-acknowledged social obligations. Therefore, when referring to a person of humaneness and righteousness (*renyizhishi*), any Confucian intellectual would associate him with righteously undeniable obligations (*yiburongci*).

² Gao Zi Shang, *The Works of Mencius* (*mengzi, gaozi shang*).

³ Yao Yue, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, yao yue*).

⁴ Gongsun Chou Shang, *The Works of Mencius* (*mengzi, gongsunchou shang*).

Moral Rights Inherent in Human Beings

The founders of the Confucian School in the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period were basically this-worldly oriented rather than Confucian scholars self-contented by sitting in their studies like Zhu Xi in the Song Dynasty or resigned to deep mountains like Wang Fuzhi in the early Qing Dynasty. They were not only rich in internal spiritual cultivation, but also committed in ambition to rule the country and the world under the heaven; they were both engaged in professional tutorship and involved in political and legal events of various sorts. Confucius in his lifetime served as the mayor of capital as well as the Chief Judge in his home dukedom, Mencius served as a minister in Dukedom Qi and Xun Zi hold the post of academy curator for three terms in Dukedom Qi and once served as the magistrate at Lan Ling county, Dukedom Chu. For their involvements relative to political and legal events, these pioneer Confucian scholars were mainly serving as political, legal, military, and diplomatic advisors among various dukedoms in central China. Being the most prestigious advisor for international politics in the Warring States Period, Mencius identified his status in full self-respect and justified his rights in cosmological ethics, thus hatching up the idea of human rights of Confucian category, that is, the moral rights for human beings.

When he was doubted by his disciple Peng Geng that “Dear tutor, don’t you think yourself to be arrogant as to have dozens of vehicles and hundreds of disciples at your service while travelling in political persuasions among dukedoms?” Mencius responded assuredly that “If not justified by righteous Tao, I would not accept a bowl of food; but if justified by righteous Tao, a poor guy like Shun had accepted naturally the throne donated to him by previous King Yao. Can such acceptance of power be apprehended as arrogance?”⁵ As the courtesy Mencius was treated, it was comparable to that of high rank official, that was why his disciple felt this treatment would be regarded as arrogance to other administrative of high rank in powerful dukedoms. Such worry of his disciple seemed reasonable from the power-centered perspective popular then. But Mencius approached to the courtesy treated to him from the right-centered perspective. For him, every individual had been endowed from the cosmic doctrine his sacred moral rights. Such sacred rights, once transformed as moral rights in the secular world, were naturally deemed superior to the powers of monarchs, even the sons of heaven. In Mencius’ intellectual frame the ranks derived from the natural divinity in the form of heaven-bestowed title definitely superior to that of monarch-bestowed title. He thus observed that “There are titles bestowed by heaven and man. Humaneness, righteousness, loyalty, faithfulness, and being never tired of kindness, these are heaven-bestowed titles. Ministers, barons, and officials in general are the man-bestowed titles. The ancient gentlemen cultivated themselves for the heaven-bestowed titles for their own sakes, and man-bestowed titles were sought after alternatives. But nowadays people are cultivating themselves for

⁵ Teng Wen Gong Xia, *The Works of Mencius* (mengzi, tengwengong xia).

heaven-bestowed titles in the hope of securing man-bestowed titles. Once they have acquired man-bestowed titles they are no hesitant in giving up heaven-bestowed titles. There can be no other embarrassment than this, and in the final analysis their acquired man-bestowed titles are bound to lose.”⁶ What heaven-bestowed titles mean to Mencius is comparable to man-bestowed titles in human society, but the sanctity and fairness intrinsic to heaven-bestowed titles bear absolute value, in contrast, man-bestowed titles are only conditional in the hands of their donors who are unfair, secular, unstable, and easy to change their wills. So the holders of man-bestowed titles lack their own initiatives in acquiring and maintaining their titles, and consequently they are inferior to that of heaven-bestowed titles. Titles in this contrast exposes Mencius in his basic evaluation on human rights, which he prioritized the intrinsically bestowed moral rights to the socially appointed powers, be it either political or legal powers. He demonstrated his preference on moral rights by stating “Human beings, by heart, have the same desire to be valuable. But there are invaluable assets stored in human identity bereft of desire. What people desire at the expense of moral rights identical to humaneness, righteousness, loyalty and faithfulness are not the intrinsically nursed values. The secular powers they desire may come and go as wished by their givers just like Zhao Meng, the powerful minister of seal in Dukedom Jin.”⁷ “Intrinsically nursed values” are felt and cherished by Heart-Mind (*xinsi*), expressive of moral rights bestowed by heaven. The ignorance to such sacred rights may confuse people’s heart and mind, leading them in pursuing political and legal powers at the cost of their moral rights. Throughout the span of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods, Dukedom Jin had been considered the model of violations (*wudao*) instigated by secular powers. To think of what Confucius commented about “Duke Jin Wen is wicked-minded than morally just. But Duke Qi Huan is morally just than wicked-minded.”⁸ And the authentic history also has this entry recorded as “unjustified split of Duke Jin by three powerful ministers.” (*sanjia fenjin*), which means exactly the tradition of violations in Duke Jin. Duke Liang Hui whom Mencius admonished with the Doctrine of Humane Politics and Sharing Happiness Fairly with People (*yumintongle*) is the leading protagonist in Dukedom Wei, one the three split dukedoms from original Dukedom Jin and Zhao Meng, in Mencius’ example, had been the most powerful minister before Dukedom Jin was dismembered. To pinpoint him, Mencius purposely had moral rights very much in the foreground of justice and eternity to the degradation of administrative powers in bias and fragility.

In the political and legal sources, the secular powers symbolized by man-bestowed titles are derived from the administrative institutions or their representatives, being provided or deprived dogmatically or sentimentally by institutional stipulations and wills of its executives. Yet the moral rights symbolized by heaven-

⁶ Gao Zi Shang, *The Works of Mencius* (*mengzi, gaozi shang*).

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Xian Wen, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, xian wen*).

bestowed titles are endowed by human lives themselves, much similar to the natural world in the universe whose natural rights are intrinsic to their own evolutions. In a due sense they are justified as universally fair rights. And such universally moral rights are expressed in Confucian tradition as “Nature-Mandate” (*xingming*), the abbreviated term of Heaven-Mandated-Nature. In line with Confucian tradition of the Integration between Heaven and Human, human is one of the billion species in the natural world, thereby being endowed with natural rights. This is identical to what has been stated in the first sentence in *The Doctrine of the Mean* (*zhongyong*): “The heaven’s mandate is the nature of all beings.” But among all the beings under the heaven only man can apprehend the natural rights and its universality and justice in the term of Heaven-Mandated-Nature. Confucian scholars would thus infer that among all beings in the universe only human behaves itself in distinction of integrating heart and mind with mandate. Xun Zi has this comparison and inference: “Water and fire have their constituents in air but not yet in lives, grasses and trees have their constituents in lives but yet not in conscience, animals have their constituents in their conscience but not yet in righteousness, but human being has its constituents in air, in lives, in conscience as well as in righteousness. Therefore human being is the most valuable species under the heaven.”⁹ The righteousness in his context is the awareness of moral rights, similar to that in Mencius when he advocated the cultivating cosmic air, being accomplished by means of righteousness and Tao. The west thinkers tend to claim: there is no rights for liberty, there is no chance for life. To think of the popular words by Patrick Henry: Liberty or Death! I would conclude for Confucian scholars: if there were no moral rights, human beings would be just walking corpses without souls. Therefore, Mencius should claim this way: “One who works out with his heart completely apprehends the nature of all things in the universe, in such case he comes to understand what heaven’s mandates. So human being is anticipated to fulfill his heart function to think affectionately and harmonize his heart with universal natures for the vocations destined by heaven’s mandate. Such a holy determination will not alter despite being shorter or longer life expectancy, and this is what heaven’s mandate is being performed by man.”¹⁰ Nature in the universe is the target of reflected affectionately by heart, and at the same time it symbolizes the natural state and rights of all universal beings, its universality and fairness being vested with religiosity, that is, moral rights have been revealed and fortified in this doctrine of heaven-conferred-nature faith system. Now we are clear to see that the Heart-Nature Scholarship of Mencius does not only attest the natural rights for all universal beings including human from the perspective of epistemology and cosmology, but also employs such rights in integrating between heart-nature, cultivating oneself and performing heaven’s mandate in humanly social commitments, thus achieving the transformation of moral rights from natural rights in human social activities. The origin and

⁹ Wang Zhi, *The Works of Xun Zi* (*xunzi, wangzhi*).

¹⁰ Jin Xin Shang., *The Works of Mencius* (*mengzi, jinxin shang*).

transformation of such moral rights consequently constitutes the base, dynamics, and orientation of a state or secular powers.

Now we may come to the inference that Heart-Nature Scholarship projected and expounded in Mencius does not limit its academics to the epistemological functions of intelligent heart or heart-mind reflections, or to the nature of cosmological beings, and its charms and ambitions are vindicated on human values that intelligent heart has affectionately felt and discovered from the natural qualifications of universal beings, consequently leading to his conviction in universally-existed moral rights. His epistemology and cosmology featured on human subjectivity and moral conscience has distinguished human moral rights from the natural rights of universal beings in a clear intention to address the human rights of Confucian category. Based on such category of human rights, we may fairly be comfortable to comprehend the political philosophy of those master scholars of Confucian style in their attitudes toward the secular powers in Chinese history.

What Confucius approached to secular power can be depicted as 'self-confident disobedience'. He thus expressed his religious commitment: "I am endowed with grand virtue, Huantui could do nothing to hurt me."¹¹ Huantui was the Sima in Dukedom Song, the title of the chief military commander, Confucius openly challenged his secular power by his sacred moral right, modeling himself in 'despising powers by moral rights'. And in some other cases cited in the *Analects of Confucius*, he insisted that "serving the king by cosmic righteousness and resigning your service if he violates the principle of cosmic righteousness", "when asked by his disciple Zilu how to serve the king, Confucius replied that 'you would rather offend his dignity than please him in cheating'." "Confucius often fled from one dukedom to another, from Dukedom Qi for Duke Qi Jing's disrespect, and from Dukedom Lu for its prime minister Ji Huanzi in his excessive indulgence with beautiful dancing girls donated from Dukedom Qi without civil service for three days." And Confucius also thus admonished his disciple his own motto that "a gentleman should prioritize cosmic Dao (or *Tao*) to delicious food," "the military commander can be captured but the free will of a person will not be contorted" and "the powerful Duke Jin Wen is deceitful than faithful". In these statements and commentaries, Confucius was explicitly demonstrating the popularity, fairness, and transcendence of the moral rights congenital to human beings. And these congenital moral rights were the very justification that Confucian scholars would employ in evaluating or confining the dukes or their powerful ministers their secular powers. To evaluate or confine secular power by moral rights is to reveal constitutional philosophy of Confucian feature, and this gave rise to the modern agenda of 'Five-Power-Balanced Constitution' (*wuquan xianfa*) by Sun Yat-sen, the founder of the Republic of China, the political and legal integration between the western principle of checks and balances expressed in executive, legislative and judicial powers, and the Chinese Confucian constitutionalism expressed in 'power to examination' and 'power to supervise'. To Confucian scholars, examination is the subjective

¹¹ Shu Er, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, shu er*).

expression of moral rights and supervision is the deterrent to the ideas, systems, and acts that might violate human moral rights.

Based himself on Confucian principles of ‘humane benevolence’, Mencius constructed his own ‘heart-nature scholarship’ embracing his epistemology of ‘comprehending language’ (*zhiyan*), his cosmology on the evolution of ‘cosmic substance’ (*haoranzhiqi*) and his life philosophy of ‘cultivating oneself into a cosmic personality’ or the Great Husband (*dazhangfu*). In his system, human moral rights have been vested with ultimate value inspiring other Confucian scholars in expatriating on ‘heaven’s Tao’, ‘benevolence and righteousness’ and ‘Confucian Humaneness and Mencian Righteousness’ (*kongren mengyi*). The theoretical import of these terms is much similar to that of natural rights explained by John Lock, but Chinese tended to term it as ‘Heaven-Mandated-Nature Theory’, identical to Chinese philosophy of right. From this theory Mencius developed his famous political philosophy of ‘people’s right over king’s power’ and his constitutional principle of ‘heaven complying with people’s volition’. Reinforced by Mencius’ philosophy of right, later Confucian scholars have been critical toward emperor system ever since, typical comments being that the Three Dynasties of the Xia, the Shang and the Zhou were manipulated by saint kings while the emperor systems after the Qin and Han Dynasties were manipulated by despotic or heroic emperors. For saint kings they ruled the world for public wealth, but for heroic emperors they ruled the world just for their families, the Han Dynasty being the Liu Family manipulated and the Tang Dynasty being the Li Family manipulated. Thus a heated debate was introduced into Chinese political and legal philosophies known as ‘the debates between kings and despots’, ‘the debates between the Three Dynasties and the Qin and Han Dynasties’, ‘the debates between saints and heroes’, and ‘the debates between public wealth and family benefit’, being summarized in ‘the debates between righteousness and benefits’. The concept of righteousness here is derived from the doctrine of ‘Confucian Humaneness and Mencian Righteousness’, i.e. the universal ethical sense of moral rights. To interpret universal human moral right in terms of righteousness, Mencius managed to devalue the political power of dukedom or monarch in stressing the subjectivity of human moral rights from whose consent the duke’s political powers were derived. Mencius therefore enunciated that “People is the most valuable in the world, country comes second, and monarch the last. Therefore it is the people that make monarch his throne, it is the monarch that makes dukes their ranks, and it is the duke that makes his ministers their positions.”¹² In the process to form governmental institutions and to bestow administrative powers, people constitute the vital role in such a process in terms of politics and legislation: without masses of the people there would be no country, i.e. the world under the heaven; without country there would be no country leader, i.e. the heaven’s son; without country leader there would be no appointed officers, i.e. the dukes and their ministers whose powers are bestowed from their heaven’s son. Inferred

¹² Jin Xin Xia., *The Works of Mencius* (*mengzi, jinxin xia*).

conversely, all the powers of a country are derived from the assent of the masses and the officials holding these powers at all levels should be responsible to the masses. The very reason that officials should be responsible for their powers is that masses of the people are justified by sacred and superior moral rights which might vest or divest officials their powers. In his legal philosophy, Mencius stated the sources of power in 'heaven complying with people's volition': "When powers employed in conducting religious sacrifice, all spirits are pleased to accept, a sign of heavenly acknowledgement; when powers employed in administering civil affairs, civilians are satisfied with them, a sign of human acknowledgement. These acknowledgements are justifying the sources of powers, therefore the heaven's son, or the monarch, is not the legitimate source of power. Saint Shun served as prime minister for Monarch Yao for 28 years in the acknowledgement of heaven instead of human monarch. When Monarch Yao was deceased, Saint Shun observed obligatory memorial service for three years and then escaped to remote southern area from the capital, yet all dukes went to pay their tributes to self-exiled Saint Shun rather than Monarch Yao's son; people with legal case would rather refer to Saint Shun than to Monarch Yao's son; people would eulogize Saint Shun instead of Monarch Yao's son. All these arrangement was done by heaven rather by human. Therefore Saint Shun had to return to the center of the country and assumed the throne. If Saint Shun had maneuvered to reside in Monarch Palace upon his master ruler's decease browbeating the young hereditary ruler, he would have been accused of usurpation instead of heavenly sanction. In the Grand Vow this was solemnly stated that heaven makes judgment only via the eyes and ears of the people."¹³ Such political and legal philosophies of Mencius show that all social events in a country, be them religious, legal, administrative, and power-shifting, must comply with people's volition, which constitutes the holy right counterbalancing secular powers. The holy yet ultimate right is also insinuated by cosmic virtue or Confucian morality, and being cogently compatible with Mencius in his "a just cause enjoys abundant support while an unjust cause finds little", "the benevolent is invincible" and "the secular powers can not be justified other than people's support". And these are the aspects of Confucian ethical constitutionalism with moral rights as its keynote.

Moral Rights and Heart-Nature Consciousness

There have been two inveterate clues to associate Confucianism with Chinese despotic emperorism: one being the *Three Principles (san gang)* proposed by Dong Zhongshu and another *the Policy to Banish Other Schools of Thought and to Promote only Confucianism (bachu baijia, duzun rushu)* by Emperor Wu of Han or Han Wu Di. By the Three Principles Dong Zhongshu meant 'the subjects should be guided by his monarch, son his father and wife her husband'. In most cases,

¹³ Wan Zhang Shang, *The Works of Mencius (mengzi, wanzhang shang)*.

monarch, father, and husband is comprehended as the absolutely powerful symbols for subjects, son, and wife. These symbols expressed in family-country constitution are identified accordingly as power-centered totalitarianism, i.e. the monarch power, patriarch power, and husband power. The Selection and Appointment of the talents in the Han Dynasty and the Civil Service Examination based on Subjects in the Sui and Tang Dynasties were finally established as Civil Service System in the Song Dynasty of Chinese characteristics, deriving its intellectual and moral resources from Confucian tradition. Such civil service system with its precursors in antiquity had been playing a vital role in maintaining Chinese imperial administration since the Qin and Han Dynasties before 1911 Revolution, people would naturally connect Confucianism to power centered imperial tyranny. But, if we scrutinize into the Confucian doctrines in humaneness and righteousness, we would find out that even the Three Principles and Five Constants focused on “the Three Principles of Saint Rule is legitimized by Heaven”¹⁴ and “The justification of Dao originated in heaven, so if heaven does not alter, neither does Dao,”¹⁵ in which the essence is highlighted on the moral counterbalance based on the Five Constants (Humanity, Duty, Propriety, Wisdom, and Truth) heavenly mandated against the secular powers of monarch, father, and husband in the form of the Three Principles. By a detached observation we could hardly avoid realizing that Dong Zhongshu had been enthusiastically attending to human subjective moral rights socially functioning containment on the imperial administrative powers. Therefore, his statements bear more substantial constitutional merits rather than assumingly attributive to imperial tyranny. The advocacy to Banish Other Schools of Thought and to Promote only Confucianism, in the true sense of the term, illustrates Confucian determination to rectify despotic politics in the Qin Dynasty guided by Legalist cold-blooded utilitarianism, hence drawing clear lines of demarcation between Confucian universal moral rights and the imperial despotic powers and reevaluate Confucian realistic criticism on imperial powers and moral-right-oriented humanism.

In fact, it had been a sustained critical attitude toward the administrative powers based on individually subjective moral rights in Confucian tradition, beginning in its founder Confucius in ‘detracting and adding’ (*sun yi*) something from and to the current social constitution. By ‘detracting’ Confucius meant criticizing the defects of a current social constitution and by ‘adding’ reinforcing and accomplishing a current social constitution. For instance, Confucius detracted something negative from and added something positive to the ‘admiration to virtue’ advocated in Zhou’s rule of proprieties by ‘humaneness and righteousness’, just as the rule of proprieties in the Zhou Dynasty was the consequence of detracting from and adding to the ‘admiration to ghosts’ in the Shang Dynasty, which in turn was the

¹⁴ Dong Zhongshu, “Sophistication on Divine Mission (ji yi),” in *Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals* (*chunqiu fanlu*) (Shanghai: Shanghai Classic Press, 1989), p. 74.

¹⁵ Dong Zhongshu: “Responding to Gifted Appointment, Chapt. 3 (*ju xianliang duice*),” in *A Brief Resources in Chinese History of Philosophy, Part I, from Western and Eastern Han to Sui and Tang Dynasties* (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 1963), p. 18.

result of detracting from and adding to the ‘admiration to heaven’ in the Xia Dynasty. According to the intellectual reflections in the *Analects of Confucius*, he had accomplished a new philosophical system named as ‘humaneness scholarship’ substantially enriched by ‘piety, loyalty and righteousness’. In his reflection, Confucius established the appropriateness between a new value system and its social contexts ‘from family, country to world’. Family, in his social context, is a moderate community, country an enlarge family, and world a moral cosmos. By term of moral cosmos I mean Confucian scholars are not so accurately engaged with its physical edge and logically cogent self-perfection, rather being intent on a boundless frame to underline what Confucian ultimate morality should be. So in the morally-featured cosmic frame, Confucians associate ‘filial piety’ with the solidarity of family, ‘loyalty’ country, and ‘righteousness’ universe. With the moral doctrine encompassing piety, loyalty, and righteousness, Confucian adherents often insist on ‘behaving at family by piety’, ‘serving in country by loyalty’, and ‘performing in the universe by righteousness’. Confucius himself once attenuated this doctrine by “Filial piety constitutes the quintessence of humaneness!”¹⁶ Filial piety being the base of ideology of ‘humaneness and righteousness’ can be expanded into country context in the form of ‘loyalty transformed from piety’ and into universe in the form of ‘righteousness transformed from loyalty’. When answering how to administer service power in a dukedom, Confucius explained this way: “to be diligent on your position and loyal to your master when performing duty.”¹⁷ “What is the principle that a gentleman should follow in the universe? It can be nothing other than righteousness.”¹⁸ In the contexts of family and country, a gentleman should behave in the principle of piety and loyalty, but in the context of universe, he should definitely stick to the doctrine of righteousness, being logically amenable to “a gentleman is enlightened by righteousness”. By righteousness, Confucius firmly believed it to be the universal moral rights, superior to any secular administrative powers. He himself accordingly adopted it in his political mission as “serving the king by cosmic righteousness, or just abandoning him.”¹⁹ In his moral and political philosophy, righteousness conveys the message of universal morality and hence naturally connotes its obligation transcending all secular powers, encouraging every adherent to heaven’s mandate in performing cosmic mission. By performing cosmic mission Confucian scholars are demonstrating what they term as ‘moral courage’ (*Yi Yong*). Zi Lu, reputable for his audacity among Confucius’ disciples, once asked his master: “Should a gentleman be motivated by courage?”, Confucius thus answered: “A gentleman should be primarily motivated by righteousness. A gentleman motivated by courage instead of righteousness tends to be a rebel; a narrow-minded person motivated by courage instead of

¹⁶ Xue Er, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, xue er*).

¹⁷ Yan Yuan, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, yanyuan*).

¹⁸ Li Ren, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, li ren*).

¹⁹ Xian Jin, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, xianjin*).

righteousness tends to be a bandit.”²⁰ The import in this statement can be identical to that of “It is flattery to contribute to the ghosts of other’s ancestors; and it is open cowardice not to commit oneself to righteousness.”²¹ The accent of moral rights in the principle of righteousness or in the form of moral courage shows the universal and sacred value free from any interference of specific secular powers has its own independent priority in all social undertakings. Such value orientation fortified by heaven’s conviction survived Confucius in all besieged hardships: “If I were not abandoned by heaven, those murders from Dukedom Kuang would do no harm on me”²² and “I am endowed with cosmic virtue, despot Huan Tui would not succeed in his conspiracies against me.”²³ Such confidence and self-awareness in Confucius bear much similar religious commitments in the western tradition to rectify the divine powers of kings by natural rights of people, limiting powers by rights in essence and coming to the conclusion that the validity of power is ultimately derived from the assent of people with moral right. Unfortunately, Confucius did not delineate the relation between moral right and moral courage in his own phrase, leaving the sophistication for moral rights for Mencius. This explained the sense of Mencius’ righteousness in the entry of Confucius Humaneness and Mencius Righteousness, affiliating universal rights justified in cosmic righteousness to the heart-mind scholarship of Mencius.

Moral Rights and Conscience Based on Heart-Nature

In the world view of ancient Chinese, human is one species of millions of beings under the heaven, but distinguishes himself from all other beings in being ethically conscientious. Specifically to Confucian scholars, education or tutorship is definitely introduced to raise such ethical conscience which is not only the natural state, but also the natural right of human. Such ethical conscience being associated with both natural state and natural right has therefore been explained in Confucian tradition as *intrinsically kind knowledge (liangzhi)*, the knowledge with value orientation, which naturally expresses itself as *Heaven-Mandated Righteousness (daoyi or taoyi)*, i.e. the universal rights with value orientation. Such value-oriented knowledge has its function in both acknowledging human subjectivity of free will and maintaining universally-bestowed moral rights and sacred obligations of human beings. The awareness of such knowledge and righteousness is raised to serve the purpose of dissolving the extrinsically imposed wills to power and reducing or preventing the abuses of certain specifically invested political powers toward human moral rights. So the excuse is frequently justified in the expression

²⁰ Yang Huo, *The Analects of Confucius (lunyu, yanghuo)*.

²¹ Wei Zheng, *The Analects of Confucius (lunyu, weizheng)*.

²² Zi Han, *The Analects of Confucius (lunyu, zihan)*.

²³ Shu Er, *The Analects of Confucius (lunyu, shu er)*.

of Carrying Out or Performing the Political Mission in Heaven's Stead (*titanxingdao*) as to rectify the violations of moral rights. Regarding the natural state and moral rights of human among millions of species under the heaven, Mencius thus observed: "There is only dim rarity in the distinction between human and animals, people at large tends to neglect it, but gentleman always harbors it at heart. Saint King Shun inferred the doctrines of humaneness and righteousness in his scrutinizing natural beings and observing human ethics and performs his mission accordingly, not unconsciously pushed by these doctrines."²⁴ He believed that such moral rights specific to human beings were observed and distinctly stated by Confucian Saints, being in the due course subjective and congenial to education or tutorship. The moral conscience and rights universal to human was popular and positive to master Confucian scholars in the Spring and Autumn Period as well as Warring States Period, prior to the observation of Mencius here we have the similar observation in Xun Zi in his expounding universal righteousness in human essence.

During the periods when ancient Confucian scholars discussed their observations on moral rights, they had been theoretically affiliated with a particular cosmology in terms of Cosmic Air in Its Restless Movements (*qihualiuxing*) and Interconnectedness between Nature and Heaven's Mandate (*xingmingxiangguan*). In physical and logical sense such conceptions of Confucian scholars do not alienate themselves far from modern physical cosmology and evolution theory in the west, but what is peculiar to them is that they vested these conceptions concerning cosmology and its cosmic elements with ethical implications. In terms of Cosmic Air in Its Restless Movements and Interconnectedness between Nature and Heaven's Mandate, Chinese cosmology in the ancient bore much similarity with physical cosmology and biological evolution of modern western people, but what is distinguished is the ethical implications that ancient Confucian scholars vested with their cosmology, in the conviction that cosmos has its own ethical dynamics and human is born by nature with kindness or humaneness. And even human physiological faculty of understanding was vested with ethical feature by Confucian scholars, like to say "acquire knowledge with cosmic righteousness" (*wendao*, or simply hear about truth) and "get to know cosmic righteousness" (*zhidao*, or simply know the reason why). Much similar to Immanuel Kant in the modern west, who believes that highest faculty of human understanding is its pure reason capable of criticizing and evaluating by its own free will, as distinguished from physical sensing, experimenting, representing, and reasoning conditioned by physical objects, Confucian scholars were also optimistic about such peculiar faculty inherent to human, but termed it as intrinsically kind knowledge (*liangzhi*). To Confucian scholars, human is distinguished in that he has been intrinsically vested with knowledge for being kind (*ren gui you liangzhi*), and this conviction has two implications, one being that the epistemological faculty of human is universal and sacred in its ethical evaluation, another being that the content of such

²⁴ Li Lou Xia, *The Works of Mencius* (*mengzi, lilou xia*).

ethical evaluation, i.e. the moral rights of being universal and sacred, is absolute in its own sake. As for intrinsically kind knowledge, Mencius observed: “The faculty to perform without being taught is intrinsically performing ability; the faculty to know without contemplating is intrinsically kind knowledge. Children in their very young all know to love their relatives, when grown up all know to respect their elder brothers. To love one’s relative is the manifestation of humaneness; to respect the elder is the manifestation of righteousness. So humaneness and righteousness are universal principles under the heaven.”²⁵ The unification of the world under the heaven in the principles of humaneness and righteousness appears in the perspective of modern western scholars to be the world views of Confucian scholars, which deconstructs cosmology in the form of ethics. Yet this impression is not pertinent to Confucian ethical cosmology which still reserves the identities of physical cosmos and social instruments of mechanism. The fact is that when Confucian scholars demonstrate the moral features of cosmology and epistemology they purposely reserve in their academic domains the natural elements and social instruments of physical dimensions, but in some typical entries or terms particular to Chinese contexts, such as air, water, fire, grasses, trees, animals, barbarians, heaven, earth, human, monarch, parents, and tutors. So one can easily come across such entries or terms in Confucian structure of ethical system blending value orientations with material facets of physical beings, such as weather in person, cold-blood in water and fire, animated spirit in grasses and trees, human beings by dress but animals by heart, alien barbarians, the commonwealth, pacification, unification, identity and one big family under the heaven, person with humaneness and determination, saint monarch or cruel despot, affections by blood and kind tutors as well as beneficial friends, etc. Therefore, in the spectrum of Mencius’ ethical theory, such entries or terms like human, animals, physical beings, children, father and elder brother, way or roads, large house, fish, bear’s palm, salary and commission, state powers affiliated to heaven, monarch, etc. have visible connotations to objective elements of physical cosmos, and these physical identities are employed by Confucian scholars in demonstrating the moral rights and ethical obligations of human at large, or otherwise, even Chinese are muddy headed about these concepts such as resources under the heaven being deployed for a selfish family, resources under the heaven being deployed for public families, saint kings in the three dynasties, monarch being disdained as a public thief, great husband, serving the king by cosmic righteousness, ruling the people by cosmic righteousness, people’s right over king’s power, to despise powers by moral rights, and these are the morally intended concepts introduced into Confucian political and legal theories by employing specifically the physical matters, being associated with their daily lives and congenial to their common sense. For the concept of great husband (*dazhangfu*), which indicates a cosmically committed personality, bears no sense of an absolutely powerful husband over his wife in family context, and just in opposite sense, it signifies a sort of supremacy

²⁵ Jin Xin Shang., *The Works of Mencius* (*mengzi, jinxin shang*).

of moral personality over social powers outside family context, as Mencius himself expounded “a great husband” is one “who won’t be seduced to being obscenely rich, who won’t give in because of being poor and plebeian, who won’t reconcile himself to coercion.”²⁶ Such a husband, in Mencius’ philosophy, symbolizes a transcendent personality, had he have a family for his husband status, he definitely has cosmos as his family, so he is regarded as a cosmically committed husband. In the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period, being rich symbolizes political status and power, being poor and plebeian economic status and power, coercion military status and power, in these contexts, a great husband was borrowed to indicate a powerful person with great political, economic, and military means. When responding to the question put to him by a lobbyist named Jing Chun: “Aren’t Gong Sunyan and Zhang Yi great husbands? When they flare up, dukes are just subdued; when they feel satisfied, the world under the heaven is at peace.” To such a concept of great husband, Mencius brought in his arguments the entries of ethical merits like not being obscenely rich, not giving in and not being coerced to rectify Jing Chun’s concept of great husband which mainly focused on facets of social positions and powers. By this counterbalance, Mencius addressed the supremacy of moral rights of ordinary people to the social powers of dukes, expressive of the right-oriented philosophy in ‘despising powers by moral rights’ (*yidekangwei*).

Confronted with theoretically sophisticated and socially influential Daoists and Mohists, Mencius proposed his ‘cultivating my cosmic air or picking up my cosmic dynamics’, strengthened by his cosmology and epistemology of ethical feature, declaring his political mission in both ‘refuting Daoists and Mohists in their fallacies’ and ‘subjugating ambitious dukes and restoring the authority of saint kings’. Of course his political mission was so gorgeous that he had to seek its justification in cosmology and epistemology, thus causing the introduction of his heart-mind scholarship into his ‘cultivating my cosmic air or picking up my cosmic dynamics’ and ‘great husband, or a cosmically committed personality’ when advocating his universal moral rights. Regarding his observation into epistemology, Mencius laid emphasis on human heart rather than human mind to observe the objective world in order to acquire physical knowledge, but he meant to ‘feel’ the quality of ‘kind nature’ of human beings by heart, hence distinguishing Chinese ‘heart-mind’ (*xin si*) from ‘brain-intelligence’ (*nao si*). As for his cosmology, Mencius focused on its universal nature: “When universal nature is being discussed, people should fix their attention on its immanent quality, which attests its quality in complying with natural potential. When cleverness becomes detestable it is just because its spoiling natural potential. If human intelligence employed in controlling flood like Saint Yu in channeling it, we would applaud such intelligence. So Saint Yu does not violate against the nature of water, instead he cleverly avails himself the downwardness of the flood. If the wise coincides with natural law, his wisdom can be no greater. Even the height of heaven and the

²⁶ Teng Wen Gong Xia, *The Works of Mencius* (*mengzi, tengwengong xia*).

distance of stars can be calculated out if being attended with their nature, and the winter solstice in a thousand years can be forecast sitting in an armchair.”²⁷ His reflections here tell that cosmos exists on its immanent constancy, like Saint Yu ruling floods in channeling for its downwardness. Paralleled to all universal beings, we may draw conclusions on that heaven and stars just rotate and exist of their own accord. These immanent constancies are expressed in human nature as ethical one, apprehended by Mencius in his theory on nature being good: “Human is good in its nature, similar to water in its downwardness. Therefore there is no human being without good nature, much the same to no water without flowing downward.”²⁸ Furthermore he also linked human good nature with its epistemology, stressing the immanent nature of heart in its subjectively motivated ethics leading to the concept of heart-nature: “In human nature there is universal heart for mercy, shame, respect and justice. Heart for mercy indicates humaneness, heart for shame righteousness, heart for respect proprieties and heart for justice wisdom. These ethical qualities of mercy, shame, respect and justice are not revealed to me externally but rather internally, leaving brain observation unnecessary.”²⁹ Through Mencius we come to cherish the unity between human nature and virtue, which represents itself via integrated function of heart rather than the intellectual examinations upon objective world. Consequently, we infer from the heart-nature the universal awareness of ethics, moral rights, and public obligation.

The ethic-oriented epistemology and cosmology in Mencius’ philosophy does not only associate Heart-Nature with Being Good by Nature, but also employs this association in expounding the relations between moral rights of people at large and political powers of people with social positions. For Mencius, both filial piety at family ethic and universal righteousness under the heaven can be explained and inferred by Heart-Nature principle: “To expand your respect towards your own parents to other’s parents, to offer tender loving care to your kids as well as other’s, should such principle be universally applied, one can rule the world under the heaven as easy as turning his palm. It is stated in *The Book of Poetry*, ‘To set up a good example for your wife at home, then to influence positively on you brothers, then you can rule your country as harmoniously as home.’ Such statement reveals the possible merits initiated by one’s heart. Therefore, if you have a heart to expand and share grace with both your family members and the people in the world, you can unite the four seas at your disposal; if not, you can not secure your wife and children at home. The ancient saints were distinguished in this expansion of good-wished heart.”³⁰ To expand ethic available at home to the rule of the world under the heaven means to “have heart to expand and share grace with others in general”, and this is the imagined political and legal inferences and expansions. Later on in the Han Dynasty, Emperor Wu Di issued the edict of

²⁷ Li Lou Xia, *The Works of Mencius* (mengzi, lilou xia).

²⁸ Gao Zi Shang, *The Works of Mencius* (mengzi, gaozi shang).

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Liang Hui Wang Shang, *The Works of Mencius* (mengzi, lianghuiwang shang).

“expanding grace” (*tuienling*) in the hope that all dukes aligned by royal ties should divide and share their authorities with their own children. This political and legal mechanism based its ideology and logic exactly on the Heart-Nature Scholarship of Mencius despite its administrative utilitarianism to weaken or dismantle the political ambitions of various dukes of royal relatives. But for Mencius, expanding and sharing grace aims at safeguarding a sort of universal moral rights: “Human, by nature, has a heart to avoid what is unbearable to what is bearable, and this is what humaneness means; human, by nature, has a heart to avoid to what should not be done to what should be done, and this is what righteousness means. If a person expands his heart not to harm to its fullest extent, the merit of humaneness becomes immense; if a person expands his heart not to steal to its fullest extent, the merit of righteousness becomes immense.”³¹ The terms of ‘what is unbearable and what should not be done’ are prohibited morally as well as politically and legally, while ‘what is bearable and what should be done’ are motives and actions encouraged and protected morally as well as politically and legally. In Mencius, what is prohibited is the violation of moral rights and what is encouraged and protected is moral rights sacred by heaven’s mandate as universal nature and acknowledged by heart. Therefore, humaneness and righteousness, being identical to Heart-Nature in its natural status, can be vested with political and legal connotations when being expanded and applied in society as not to harm and not to steal. In contrast with the legal sources in the west, the Ten Commandments of religious heritage were also employed to base social and legal systems with moral values, but the distinction between Confucian scholars and Jewish rabbis lies in that the moral laws of Morse was revealed to the prophet by God, the law-giver, and supreme judge while Mencius believed that all moral laws were intrinsic to human nature, being acknowledgeable, and employed by human heart. So in Mencius’ Heart-Nature Scholarship, moral law in essence prescribed universal moral rights for human, stressing its individual self-consciousness by hear-motivated reflections instead of taking faith in holy rights by God’s covenant as seen popular in the Christian tradition. For Mencius, to motivate heart and to abide by nature was prerequisite to holy mission entrusted by Heaven, one’s political and legal powers were thus justified. He saw Heart-Nature not only from the perspective of human intellectual reflections on the natural essence, but also from that of intrinsically kind knowledge or free will to ethically evaluate one’s social behaviors or actions. His intention to expand and apply the dynamics in Heart-Nature Scholarship in social circumstances was to counterbalance political and legal powers by stressing universal moral rights. To restrict or counterbalance political and legal powers by moral rights is often referred to with a proposed dilemma by his disciple Tao Ying: if Saint Shun serves as a king, Gao Yao, the most brave and straightforward man, serves as a judge, and Saint Shun’s father commits a murder, how Saint Shun should behave himself? Mencius replied by saying: just arrest Shun’s father as a murderer. “Why does not Saint Shun stop his

³¹ Jin Xin Xia., *The Works of Mencius* (*mengzi, jinxin xia*).

father's arrest?" challenged by the disciple. Mencius explained: "Saint Shun has no power to stop the arrest, because the judge has been extraordinarily authorized in exercising his judicial power." "In the sense, does Saint Shun can only remain passive to his father's execution?" the disciple questioned again. To this, Mencius offered an optimistic solution: "Saint Shun should choose to discard his kingship as shabby shoes. In the capacity of a son he stole his convicted father and backed him to a distant beach, living happily with his father in a monarchal oblivion."³² In Mencius' logic, if king's father commits murder, he definitely has violated the universal moral rights, thereafter even Saint King Shun has no power to pardon his father as the supremacy of moral rights over political and legal powers, he has to respect what a just and honest judge decides to punish. This is the demonstration of executing one's relatives by cosmic righteousness (*dayimieqin*). Anyway this solution proves paradoxical to Mencius: as the King as well as the son of the convicted father, Saint Shun falls short of filial piety if he allows his father to be executed, but he could be violating the universal moral rights if he pardons his father by his administrative power. So there comes the challenge to make choice between moral rights and obligations as well as administrative powers and social responsibilities. According to the Confucian principles of prioritizing humaneness to body and sacrificing life to obtain righteousness, Mencius proposed that Saint Shun should have forsaken his political and legal powers in safeguarding universal moral rights. Saint Shun was frequented as a role model for Confucian scholars especially in referring to the power shifts in the Three Dynasties, disdaining administrative powers in favor of accomplishing sacred moral responsibilities. This legendary power shift was also explained in *The Works of Duke Huai Nan (huainanzi)* this way: "For Saint Yao, to rule the world under the heaven is not to exploit the people under the heaven their wealth for his own interest and monopolize the power exclusively.....When he was old he really worried about his ineffective governance under the heaven, and therefore he took the initiative in transferring his power to Saint Shun, relieving his heart just like kicking off a pair of shabby shoes."³³ In Confucian perspective of administrative powers, the world under the heaven belongs to all people under the heaven, not to one person, or a king. So the administrative powers ruling the world under the heaven must be subjected to safeguarding the universal moral rights of all people under the heaven, to which all Saint Kings are believed to have such awareness not to lord his powers over the rights of all people. If his power could not come to terms with people's rights, he might not, as being obliged by moral doctrine, stick to his power any more, so all saint kings should kick off his powers like shabby shoes in making a morally justified decision.

³² Jin Xin Shang., *The Works of Mencius (mengzi, jinxin shang)*.

³³ Liu An, "Monarch's Rule (*zhu shu xun*), *The Works of Duke Huai Nan (huainanzi)*," in *Anthologies of Master Scholars (zhuzi jicheng)* (Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Press, 1986), Vol. 7, Chapt. 9, p. 138.

Violation of Moral Rights and Social Revolution

Revolution has been a key conception in Confucian tradition regarding social justice and political correctness. Therefore, Mencius affiliated his Heart-Nature Scholarship with revolution in attempting its theoretical cohesion. By revolution Confucian scholars invariably establish the ties between social justice with universal values revealed in heaven's mandates, as being stated: "Revolutions conducted by Tang Shang and Zhou Wu Wang are justified by heaven's mandates as well as human morality."³⁴ The overthrows of King Xia Jie by Tang Shang and King Shang Zhou by Zhou Wu Wang as narrated by Confucian scholars are not examples of violations of normal rules or the assassinations of kings in common sense, they are social revolutions to perform the political mission in Heaven's stead and to soothe away misery of people by punishing the perpetrators. The much advocated overthrows are introduced to convince the political legitimacy and historical necessity in the form of social revolution. Generally, Confucian scholars would propose the logical connection between natural life and moral rights mandated by heaven, accordingly if the son of heaven or the king of administrative powers abuses the moral rights of the people consecrated by heaven, he naturally violates his legitimacy as destined by heaven. In the estimation between the son of heaven or king on earth and the people of heaven or the plebian, justice might always stand with the people. Therefore, if the son of heaven abuses the moral rights of the people, he naturally abuses the sacredness of heaven, identical to the violations of moral rights by administrative powers. Should such violations occur, every member among people is thus justified to rebel against king or his country in safeguarding his heaven-mandated rights. In affirmative comments to revolution, Mencius intends to testify his concepts of justice and human rights this way: "Revolution by Tang Shang was not to accumulate the wealth under the heaven for his own enjoyment, but to take revenge on despotic king for ordinary male and female." "The purpose of his revolution was to soothe the suffering people and to execute their despotic king". "Revolution by Zhou Wu Wang was to save people from the oceans of suffering, removing the tyrant from his post."³⁵ In this context, we reasonably conclude that revolutions favored by Confucian scholars are the legitimate punishments by Saints on the public thieves in monarch positions for their violations of universal moral rights.

Confucian tradition termed as the doctrines advocated by Confucius and Mencius is, by essence, the philosophy of "this-world", creative and invigorating hermeneutics toward the political constitutions in the form of Zhou's proprieties, or the rule of proprieties. Such proprieties innovated by Duke Zhou were sets of institutions based on certain moral values, thereafter Jia Yi, a talented Confucian scholar in the early Han Dynasty, defined Zhou's proprieties as to clarify their political and legal features: "Proprieties are articulated as the principles to

³⁴ Ge, Tuan Ci, *The Book of Changes*.

³⁵ Teng Wen Gong Xia, *The Works of Mencius* (*mengzi, tengwengong xia*).

consolidate a country, to deify its monarch and to secure the king with the obedience from his subjects. Monarch has his courtiers in administrative service in order to see the political correctness of proprieties. Monarch shares power and virtue as to see proprieties in their distinctive functions. In the administrative and society as well, proprieties are seen in distinguishing the higher from the lower status, the strong from the weak positions. The virtues of proprieties are seen in the love of the son of heaven towards all people under the heaven, the love of duke towards all people in his dukedom, the love of officers towards his subordinates, the love of ordinary people towards their family members. Proprieties have ruled the violation of humaneness by lack of love, and the violation of righteousness by indulgent love.”³⁶ In the first sentence, Jia Yi still reiterated the tradition what had been observed as proprieties made by Duke Zhou, similar to the sense of compulsory state will be in modern legal system of the west. But the following sentences in this quotation were indicating clearly the moral values of proprieties as Confucian scholars insistently advocated. It is highly possible that Duke Zhou only emphasized in his proprieties the justified governance of monarch or king, but Confucius and Mencius as well as other Confucian scholars availed themselves this authority to introduce into the political and legal systems represented by Zhou’s proprieties Confucian ethics in terms of humaneness and righteousness. And this academic maneuver of Confucian scholars is schemed at, it seems to me, counterbalancing the powers of monarch by universal moral rights. For Confucius intentionally stated: “If not guided by humaneness, can any person behave himself in accordance with proprieties? If not guided by humaneness, can any person behave himself in accordance with music?”³⁷ In fact, Confucian scholars wanted to employ the ethical means to confine administrative powers from being abused as an intellectual solution to the social chaos where violations of proprieties and music were rampant. This ethical check on monarch powers implies systematic reflections on how to prevent institutional or administrative powers from ill monopoly and wily abuse. To remedy the political and legal chaos caused by the blatant violations of proprieties and music in Confucian morality-check device also gives us a clue to understand the ethical restraint in terms of “ought” in natural law on positive legality in term of “is”, as well as the rectification of “evil law is still a law” by “ill-legitimate law” in contemporary justice experiences.

If we associate the moral rights insisted in Confucianism with political constitution, we can be affirmative to the legitimacy in its concept of revolution, which integrates ‘revolutions justified by heaven’s mandates as well as human morality’ with ‘universal doctrines heavenly vertical and earthly horizontal’. In the context of heaven and human, heaven-mandated-nature unveils the universal natural status while human the subjective personality identical to ‘divine conscience’ (*tianliang*), which bases itself on the function of heart to experience the nature of universal

³⁶ Jia Yi, “On Proprieties, The New Book of Jia Yi (*xin shu, li*),” in *The Complete Works of One Hundred Scholars* (*bai zi quanshu*) (Changsha: Yuelu Press, 1993), Vol. 1, Chapt. 6, p. 713.

³⁷ BaYi, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, ba yi*).

beings to the process of ‘the full performance of heart’s function is to understand the universal nature, hence to testify the holy heaven’s mandates’. Therefore, to unify heart-nature and universal natural status is to constitute the moral rights of Mencius, leading to his coinage of ‘holy heaven title’ (*tianjue*). The superiority of ‘holy heaven title’ to ‘secular human title’ in Mencius legal philosophy proves to be the checks and balances grounded on universal moral rights. According to their political and legal philosophies, both Confucius and Mencius believe that checks and balances grounded on universal moral rights are the indispensable reflections on political constitution in the spirit of ‘the differentiation between the public and the individual’. According to Confucian tradition, the Three Dynasties, i.e. the Xia, the Shang, and the Zhou, are the domains of the public exhibiting universal human moral rights while the imperial constitutions after the Qin and Han Dynasties the domains of the individual exclusive only to the ruling families, inevitably violating the universal moral rights of the public. In the domain of the public an individual surname of ruling royal family is theoretically eclipsed by public surnames of all the subjects which is idiomatically termed as ‘one hundred surnames’ (*baixing*, or powerless civilians) with universal moral rights fairly endowed. Meanwhile in the domains of the individual specific powers are exclusively authorized to ruling families, such as the Han Dynasty dominated by Liu royal family, the Song Dynasty by Zhao, and the Ming Dynasty by Zhu, etc. In any of these individual domains, the royal power invariably tends to infringe on the public rights of ‘one hundred surnames’. Such infringements are the legitimate source justifying Confucian scholars in their criticism to political constitutions in office and in their advocacy for social revolutions. In Confucian tradition critical to Chinese political constitutions, the Three Dynasties are authentically referred to as indicators of public domains bolstered by cosmic righteousness while Qin and Han the individual domains violating against cosmic righteousness. So the constitutional structure of commanderies and districts is the typical of individual domain which Wang Fuzhi denounced it as “the structure of commanderies and districts remains stereotyped for more than two thousand years.”³⁸ Inculcated by Confucian instructions on universal moral rights, most of the social revolutions in Chinese history availed themselves the doctrine of ‘performing the political mission in Heaven’s stead’, its legitimacy being visible to that no infringement on human moral rights is tolerable, or the infringed is entitled to restore their holy moral rights by social revolution.

In both such intellectual logic and social tradition, Confucius committed himself to rectifying Zhou’s proprieties by introducing humaneness and righteousness, containing monarch power by moral rights. His reflections on “serving the king by cosmic righteousness, or just abandoning him”, “the rich and noble without righteousness seems no value to me just like floating clouds”, “no governance is

³⁸ Wang Fuzhi, “Commentaries on The History As A Political Mirror (*du tongjian lun*),” in *The Complete Works of Chuan Shan* (*chuanshan quanshu*) (Changsha: Yuelu Press, 1988), Vol. 10, Chapt. 1, p. 67.

fully operative unless credited by its people” and “go with the tide benefiting the people.”³⁹ His reflections as such are originated in human subjectivity and maintaining universal human moral rights in their checking and balancing political powers of the governments. Such morally obligatory rights are even applicable to the saint kings of the Three Dynasties: “To cultivate oneself to serve the interest of the public, I wonder if Saint Kings like Yao and Shun had ever accomplished.”⁴⁰ But as for the infringements in forms of violating proprieties, cosmic doctrines, and exploiting people from the monarchs and their officials, Confucius did not encourage people with social revolution to claim their rights: “Confucius commented on music for Shao, eulogy for Yao who voluntarily abdicated his throne to Shun, as being both perfect and kind, while commenting music for Duke Zhou Wu, eulogy for Duke Zhou Wu who overthrew King Zhou in the Shang Dynasty through revolution, as being perfect but kind.”⁴¹ Even toward those dukes and courtiers in dukedoms of Qi and Lu, who blatantly violated cosmic doctrine and contaminated virtue, Confucius did not advise social revolution in maintaining people’s moral rights rather left these dukedoms, voting by foot. And this vote of his abandoning immoral dukes explained his longtime exiles wandering among other dukedoms after his middle age.

We will here again take Mencius for example in dealing with monarch, dukes, or the powerful courtiers in their violations of universal moral rights. In his scheme of moral rights, Mencius first of all placed personality of great husband as the sacred, universal moral rights above all secular administrative powers. To any implementing secular power Mencius definitely ushered in moral rights to deter it from being abused and his intention is to strike a proper balance between power and responsibility, to be exact, any power in its use is simultaneously obliged to respect and uphold the universal moral rights of others. The balance thus addressed between power and responsibility in Mencius dialectically leads to another parallel balance between universal moral rights and universal social obligations, expressive in his positive commentaries on revolutions in performing heaven’s mission and on moral courage of ordinary male and female. Based on the moral rights that “humaneness is identical to human”, the violation of moral rights means the breach of humaneness and righteousness, revolution means upholding universal moral rights. Mencius further explained that “violation of humaneness is identical to thief, violation of righteousness is identical to murder, a monarch of thief and murder is a solitary to public indignation, in this logic, the execution of King Shang Zhou, a public thief and murder, has nothing to do with assassination.”⁴² If the administrative power symbolized in the son of heaven violates the universal moral rights symbolized in humaneness and righteousness, we are then reasonable to conclude that the private power of monarch has thus far encroached upon the

³⁹ Yao Yue, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, yao yue*).

⁴⁰ Xian Wen, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, xian wen*).

⁴¹ BaYi, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, ba yi*).

⁴² Liang Hui Wang Xia, *The Works of Mencius* (*mengzi, lianghuiwang xia*).

public rights of people under the heaven. In such a situation, a monarch has naturally been degraded to a disdained public thief and “everyone has full right to kill an ill-ambitious courtier and a monarch in being public thief” (*luanchen zeizi, renren de er zhu zhi*). To this relations between moral encroachment and social revolution as revealed in the legendary power shifts in the Three Dynasties, scholars before Confucius and Mencius had accepted them as a kind of religious convictions in the belief that moral awareness might have had some sorts of constraints on monarchal powers. Yet such convictions, developed in Mencius’ philosophy, were epistemologically and cosmologically associated with his Heart-Nature Scholarship, acquiring themselves articulated moral rights. He explained the much-cited revolutions as “The reason King Xia Jie and King Shang Zhou lost their rules under the heaven is that they lost their people in advance. If a monarch lost his people, he had lost their hearts already. Therefore we may conclude that to secure the rule of heaven is to secure people under the heaven first. There is way to secure people under the heaven, that is, to secure their hearts. There is way to secure people’s hearts, that is, to accumulate what they desire and to abandon what they hate. People desire for humaneness what water flowing low, what animals the wild lands. So it is the otter that drives fish to the deep water, it is the vulture that drives finches into the forests and it is the despots like King Xia Jie and King Shang Zhou who drove their people to saint kings like revolutionaries of Tang Shang and Wu Wang.”⁴³ The coherence of his explanation shows that the natural status of people is expressive of rights based on Heart-Nature Doctrine, which originates in the four moral sources in human nature as humaneness, righteousness, proprieties, and intelligence (*ren yi li zhi*, or *si duan*). The four moral sources intrinsic to human nature can be developed and exploited by human heart into human moral rights in society. To agree or disagree with the Heart-Nature Doctrine is identical to obtain the Way of Ruling or to lose the Way of Ruling, and this is the natural reason as well as political reason why society is ruled harmoniously with natural order and sustainment. Furthermore we may infer that to win and lose people’s hearts is identical to win and lose the rule under the heaven, and to violate the moral rights is identical to cause the loss of such rule, its correlative form being social revolutions. As for Mencius, the powers of monarch are always preconditioned by his respect to the rights of his courtiers, meaning that administrative superiors are invariably obliged to reconcile themselves with universal moral rights of their subordinates: “If the monarch cherishes his subordinates as his own hands and feet, his subordinates would cherish their monarch as their own belly and hearts; if the monarch despises his subordinates as service dogs and horses, his subordinates equally despise their monarch as cold-blooded strangers; if the monarch disdains his subordinates as dusts and grasses, his subordinates have full rights to refuse their monarch as greedy enemies.”⁴⁴ It is obvious that we could not infer the statement “Confucian scholars are always upholding feudalist

⁴³ Li Lou Shang, *The Works of Mencius* (*mengzi, lilou shang*).

⁴⁴ Li Lou Xia, *The Works of Mencius* (*mengzi, lilou xia*).

dictatorship”, but rather naturally leading to the ideology “people’s right over king’s power”. I am fully convinced that the moral rights based on his Heart-Nature Doctrine will be instrumental in developing the political and legal ideologies of Confucian human-ontology, if not Confucian democracy, and its self-conscience individualism. His ideological contour would be specifically outlined this way: moral rights are heavenly consecrated in human nature and self-conscientiously acknowledged in constraining all secular administrative powers, they can be compared with the human natural rights covenanted by God’s creation in the west and identically termed as human moral rights in the form of Heart-Nature Doctrine endowed by Heaven’s Mandates.

In fact, another master Confucian scholar in the Ming Dynasty, Huang Zongxi expounded the ‘heart-nature-theory’ of Mencius this way: “It was appropriate that ancient Chinese scholars paralleled civilians loving their monarch to loving their fathers, both being heavenly fairness incarnate. But nowadays Chinese civilians disgust their monarchs like wretched enemy, nicknaming him a publicly renounced guy. But narrow-minded Confucian scholars have been strait-laced in maintaining their affiliations to monarchs, being negative in commenting Saint Kings Tang Shang and Zhou Wu in their revolutions against despots Xia Jie and Shang Zhou. When they praised the fallacies of Saint Bo Yi and Saint Shu Qi committed ludicrously to their master despots, they were simply declining into unconscious accomplices in the bloody massacre of innocent civilians. They should be wiser to know that universe is destined for millions of civilians rather for one despot and his family. So revolution conducted by King Zhou Wu and the applause of Mencius to revolution are morally legitimate. So monarchists in history were often more affirmative in advocating the authorities of father and heaven as ideological taboo safeguarding their thrones, banishing Mencius from Confucian masters for official adoration. Therefore those narrow-minded Confucian scholars have been politically exploited by despotic monarchs in Chinese history in notorious shame.”⁴⁵ Through his analysis it would not be difficult to see how narrow-minded Confucian scholars betrayed Mencius his superiority of virtue over power by superstitiously sticking to the monarchical supremacy over universal moral rights. I should consider those narrow-minded Confucian scholars to be short-sighted in understanding the Confucian notion of righteousness detached from universal moral rights. Righteousness, in Confucius and Mencius, stands for ‘cosmic doctrine’ morally universal, divinely transcending any secular monarchical authorities. In such phrases and conceptions like ‘righteousness in refusing taking food from Dukedom Zhou (exhibited in Saint Bo Yi and Saint Shu Qi)’ [*yi bu shi zhou su*], ‘righteousness in refusing being subject to Duke Qin (exhibited in Saint Lu Zhonglian)’ [*yi bu di qin*], ‘righteousness stressed by Confucius in his editing *the Spring and Autumn Annals*’ [*chunqiudayi*], ‘righteousness expressed in

⁴⁵ Huang Zongxi, “On Monarch, A Ming Barbarian Waiting for A Visitor (*yuan jun, ming yi dai fang lu*),” in *The Complete Works of Huang Zongxi (huangzongxi quanji)* (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Classic Press, 2005), Vol. 1, p. 3.

aphorism' [*weiyandayi*], 'righteousness associated with profit' [*jianlisiyi*], 'righteousness justifying the execution of family members' [*dayimieqin*], 'righteousness in zero-tolerance for any hesitation' [*yiburongci*], 'righteousness breeds bravery like bravery' [*jianyiyongwei*], and 'righteousness makes obligation just' [*shi min ye yi*], we can fully sense the implications of fairness, absoluteness, transcendence, and sacredness in the word. Consequently, we cannot afford to separate Mencius favoring revolutions conducted by King Tang Shang and King Zhou Wu from his insistence on human universal moral rights.

We would also base our estimations on Mencius' contributive entries relative to Revolutions by Shang Tang and Wu Wang in "despising powers by moral rights" and "soothing away misery of people by punishing the perpetrators" in coming to some agreements with modern legal terms that the violations of human moral rights are crimes committed to them and any political or legal powers would not be the extraordinary excuses exempt from liabilities. The moral rights are basic rights of people, so the violations of these rights by any power immediately constitute legal breaches, noticeably in Chinese legal system the distinctions between violations of rights and crimes are rather dim. Legal breaches, either violations of rights or crimes, naturally ground people in their initiatives to conduct social revolutions as to uphold their moral rights, besides such groundings are obligatory to every human member, more authoritative than any secular power and even superior to individual life. In Confucian dimension, social revolutions are more connotative than monarchical replacements and power shifts, for they being implementing holy human rights as distinguished from all other beings under the heaven in the form of cosmic righteousness (*daoyi*), to be identically brief, this is to say that moral rights are the natural life human beings live in social and political context. In contrast with the "free will" that God has vested with human in distinguishing him from all other creatures after the Enlightenment in the west, and the conviction has been deeply rooted at people's hearts as popularly expressed "liberty or death". So in Mencius, we can witness the similar moral optimism in that human is always conscientious about his duty to perform cosmic missions by his heart function, linking moral rights in having or not having people's hearts with political powers in having or not having rule for the world under the heaven. In his dialectical evaluation, we might not be all startled to see his philosophy about moral rights in the statements of sacrificing life to obtain righteousness and never betraying one's natural heart.

Some Comments

It has been the case since modern times that Chinese Confucian scholars based themselves in the Heart-Nature Scholarship of Mencius as an academic example creatively developing Heaven-Mandated-Nature (*tianfuxingming*) conception in *The Doctrine of the Mean* as well as its indigenous sources to welcome the concept of human rights endowment in the west. With the introduction of Heaven-Mandated-

Nature Mencius cosmologically sanctified his reflections on universal moral rights and the political ideology personified as Great Husband. Thanks to its traditional and coherent faith in heaven's mandates, Chinese people are pleasantly prepared themselves for the concept of Heaven-Mandated-Nature in every human being, peculiar to human heart, which, small in biological form, functions immensely in comprehending, exposing, and enlightening universalities of all cosmological beings. To them, having been inculcated in Confucian tradition, Heart-Nature does not only symbolize human epistemological rights in free thinking, but also the cosmological duties in matching such rights. Chinese scholars in general are all positively instructed with the Four-Sentence-Motto by Zhang Zai, a sophisticated Confucian thinker in the Song Dynasty, that is: "To testify a cosmic heart between heaven and earth, to vindicate the heaven's mandate for all human beings, to accomplish the scholarship of ancient Saints and to bring about universal harmony for future generations."⁴⁶ With this intellectual role model in connection with the insights of Mencius' Heart-Nature Scholarship, Confucian scholars would convince themselves that all what is anticipated and motivated into action is started from human heart, which also distinguishes human being from all types of universal beings in that human heart comprehends and feels the ethical missions of heaven's mandates. In a sense of ethical epistemology, human heart is identical to cosmic heart, as believed by Lu Jiuyuan, another popular Confucian philosopher assumed to be the initiator of Heart Sect in the Song Dynasty. With a cosmic heart to accomplish missions in Confucian tradition, Mencius should be thus credited for a subjective-oriented philosophy on human moral rights with a balance between free-willed epistemological rights and ethically-intended cosmological obligations.

The vocation of Great Husband expressed in the integration between Heart-Nature and Heaven-Mandated-Nature would also lead us to the importance of political and legal personalities. When Mencius expounded the transcendence of Great Husband in its integration between righteousness and cosmic doctrine, he was vesting each self-conscious person with universal moral rights fully nourished and developed in a cosmic spirit of fairness and legitimacy. In the context of Chinese cosmology combining Dao (metaphysical dynamics) and De (physical representations), the moral rights or the rights of Dao De is the very right to life in the forms of all physical beings in the universe as well as its cognate universal obligations, to notice that if Dao De is specifically borrowed to indicate human virtue, then its cognate universal obligations are transformed into social duties. In due course, we see everyone's holy right to punish what has been abused by secular powers, and such punishment has been termed as performing the political mission in heaven's stead in Chinese heuristics or the judicial punishment in heaven's stead in Chinese legal philosophy. A modern Chinese scholar compared the Heart-Nature Scholarship of Mencius with the conviction in human-right endowment in this conclusion: "Rights, in any case, have been mandated by

⁴⁶ Quotations from Zhang Zai, see Feng Youlan, *The Complete Works of Three Pines Hall* (*sansongtang quanji*) (Zhengzhou: Henan People's Publishing House, 2000) Vol. 10, p. 135.

heaven's good wish, not by human initiative. Since human has been endowed by heaven's mandates with nature, being vested accordingly with equal rights to exist as natural beings. If heaven has mandated human and other beings to co-exist, it has a good wish to decree human his rights to live with the help of other beings."⁴⁷ And this conclusion has traced its ideological tradition largely to the Heaven-Mandated-Nature Theory, which had been gorgeously enriched by Mencius with legal implications of universal moral rights.

In the final analysis, we cannot be safe in capturing the quintessence of Confucian political and legal thoughts by ignoring the concept of righteousness in Mencius' philosophy, if the doctrines advocated by Confucius and Mencius were specifically termed as Confucius for humaneness and Mencius for righteousness. In the political situation termed as Big Chaos under the Heaven (*tianxiadaluan*), the concept of righteousness advocated by Mencius bears the sense of "ought" in his moral rights supposition, expressive of his political and legal transcendence symbolized by Saint King in his Differentiation between King and Despot. In his disgust at despotism, Mencius saw "is" in the positive legalism the limits in its instrumental "edicts, power and strategy", with the supremacy in "ought" in the Confucian natural law to overtake "is" as the parallels of "holy heaven title and secular human title", "virtue and position", "moral rights and secular powers", "people and monarch", "sharing happiness with people and enjoying happiness exclusively" and "a solitary public thief and revolutions of Tang Shang and Wu Wang". In dialectical balance of rights and obligations as well as powers and responsibilities, Mencius created not only a subjective epistemology by means of Heart-Nature Scholarship, but also initiated the political and legal philosophies featured by ethical epistemology and cosmology. Comparing with the covenant rights in justifying God and justified human in the Christian tradition, the moral rights advocated by Mencius in his epistemological and cosmological doctrine of righteousness do suggest to Confucian legal philosophy human subjectivity, universal fairness, and social revolution.

⁴⁷ He Qi and Hu Liyuan, "Notes to Educations (*quan xue shu hou*)," cited in Zhang Jinfan, *The Chinese Legal Tradition and Its Modern Transformation* (3rd Edition) (Beijing: Law Press, 2009), p. 426.

Chapter 19

Political Personality Revealed in The Great Learning (*daxue*)

Introduction

The Great Learning (daxue) is the integrated scholarship between moral saint and administrative king of Confucian tradition, its essence being epitomized as Three Principles and Eight Items (*san gang ling ba tiao mu*) in *The Great Learning*. The first principle of comprehending universal representation is the human reflections upon cosmic dynamics, the second principle of assuming-new-person mirrors Confucian political idealism based on natural justice and moral consciousness for social equity, the third principle of halting at consummation represents Confucian political personality and its life philosophy. The Eight Items of observing, comprehending, adjusting, rationalizing, self-regulating, family establishing, country ruling and world harmonizing are the gradual process to accomplish the Confucian scholarship of *The Great Learning*, hence building up the cohesion of Confucian moral politics by unity of principles and items. Compared with cosmology and epistemology of both Buddhism and Taoism, Confucian *Great Learning* highlights its political personality for all-anthropo-equity (*tianxia wei gong*) and expresses its moral intuition and sense of responsibility by the Conscience of One (*shen du*). The political ethics revealed in the *Great Learning* distinguishes itself both from the dialectical life philosophy expounded by Buddhist Three Seals of the Dharma (*san fa yin*) and the natural political philosophy advocated by Daoist Abiding by Nature (*dao fa ziran*), therefore demonstrating itself to be political philosophy based on The Integration between Heaven and Human. Even within Confucian tradition, political ethics revealed in the *Great Learning* surpassed Three Principles and Five Constants (*san gang wu chang*) by the Han Dynasty Confucians in terms of cosmology and epistemology.

The Great Learning, focusing on becoming the great by virtue of learning, is one of the Four Books (*sishu*) of Confucian Classics advocated by Chinese government after the Song Dynasty. The Four Books had been primary guidebooks for civil service examinations for 700 years from the late Southern Song Dynasty to the Late Qing Dynasty. Among the Four Books, *The Great Learning* proves to be

a short essay elucidating Confucian political ideas on ruling the world and hence was ranked the first of the Four Books by Zhu Xi, the most influential Confucian scholar in the Song Dynasty, as to indicate the cosmo-ethics of Confucian world-oriented philosophy. The annotations and elucidations upon the Four Books by Zhu Xi are all targeted at cultivating oneself for civilian benefit, with *The Great Learning* implying the unity between life philosophy and political philosophy of Confucian cosmology and epistemology. The unique expression of concise phrase is termed as exploring metaphysical imports by concise words (*weiyandayi*) in *The Great Learning* also indicates its principled guidelines in Confucian intellectual system.

The Great Learning and Authority

Though *The Great Learning*, thus named and posted the first of the Four Books, it is not an independent book and instead it can only be acknowledged as a short essay, one originally in the *Book of Proprieties* (also *The Book of Rites* [*lij*]) and marked out by Han Yu in the Tang Dynasty to demonstrate the Chinese Tradition (*daotong*) against Indian Buddhist Tradition (*fatong*), with their respective emphasis on the Confucian Ruling of Society (*zhi shi*) and Buddhist Ruling of Mind (*zhixin*). The essay of *Great Learning*, after Han Yu's choice, had been ardently advocated by Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi in the Song Dynasty before it was officially accepted as one of the Confucian classics in illustrating Confucian Doctrine of Being Inner Saint and Outer King (*neisheng waiwang zhidao*)

The Buddhism transplanted from India and Taoism indigenous to China had joined Confucianism in forming the Religious Triad in the Tang Dynasty when Han Yu felt obliged to fight against these non-Confucian teachings. The negative impact thrust upon Confucian tradition was visible in two aspects, with the ever-expanding influence especially among Chinese officials and intellectuals. One of them was that the Buddhism as alien religion might convert her Chinese adherents into new foreign barbarians, disrupting Chinese mentality instead of the border clashes between Chinese and foreign invaders, and another aspect was that life philosophy proposed by Buddhism is directly against the one of Confucianism which targeted itself in achieving universal wealth for all people under the heaven instead of individual attainment of conscience. To Han Yu, should the individual enlightenment based on Buddha nature have overtaken Confucian social ethics, then the Chinese society and civil structure would be self-destructing. The religious threat imposed by Buddhism had been exposed to the court when the Prefect of Grand Scribes Fu Yi explained his worries to the First Emperor of the Tang Dynasty (*tang gaozu*) this way: "Confucian Proprieties originated in filial piety at home can be translated into loyalty towards emperors when serving at court. This is the integration between obedient children and obligatory subjects. But Buddhist adherents tend to leave home and ignore his duty to parents and emperors, they have inherited biological parts from their parents, yet they aim at destroying such

hereditary stinking beings.” His defiant remarks on Buddhism went on to the Great Emperor of Tai Zong (*tang taizong*): “Buddhists are shrewd aliens originated in the remote west and gradually sneaked its way into China and attracted most of the narrow-minded persons in the mode of Chinese Taoism. The Buddhist doctrine is thus detrimental to both our country and our people.”¹ The stance took by Fu Yi is obviously one of traditional Confucianism, underlining the contrast between the secular Confucian ethics and the sacred Buddhist conscience and depreciating alien Buddhism as narrow-minded scholarship (*xiaoxue*) by applauding Chinese Confucianism as broad-minded scholarship (*daxue*), which stresses the universal social service to all people under the heaven. In the Late Tang Dynasty, the then master Confucian scholar Han Yu inherited Fu Yi’s defiance against Buddhism, eventually deprecating it as alien law of jungle ruling only animals instead of human beings. From Confucian perspective the contrast between human beings and animals lies in human conscience of rational enlightenment acquired from the natural world while animals living only on their biological instincts. This contrast revealed in the relations between heaven and human exhibits the quintessence of Confucianism observed by Han Yu: “Heaven is the master of sun, moon and stars. Earth is the master of grass, trees, mountains and rivers. Human being is the master of the aliens and animals.”² To Confucian scholars all people other than Chinese were aliens. If Chinese believed in alien religion such as Buddhism they would just mean to degenerate from human beings to animals or devils. So to Han Yu, those Chinese Buddhist affiliates were just new category of foreign devils, and the process for their salvation should be: “To stop one river to make a smooth flow of another, to barricade one action to make another free. To convert Chinese Buddhist devil into Chinese people, to throw Buddhist sutra on fire, to change their temples into homes, to guide those converted people with the doctrines of our ancient saint kings, and therefore the common welfare is secured for the miserable. And this is the moral destination of Confucianism.”³ This is the objective proposed by Confucian “Universality under the Heaven” (*tianxiadatong*) written in the essay *Universal Ruling (li yun)*, the *Book of Proprieties (lij)*, which is thought to be opposite to that of Buddhism as its doctrine revealed in *Three Principles in The Great Learning*.

As opposed to Dharma Tradition in Buddhism ignorant of parents and kings, Han Yu suggested a Confucian Dao Tradition focused on filial piety and imperial loyalty. He scrutinized that Dharma Tradition had been lucky in being brought into China after the Policy to Banish Other Schools of Thought and to Promote only Confucianism (*bachu baojia, duzun rushu*). That is to say, it had been unlucky this

¹ Liu Xu, “Biography of Fu Yi, The Older Version of Tang Dynasty History (*jiutangshu, fuyizhuan*),” in *The Twenty-Four Histories* (Version of Simplified Chinese) (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 2000) Vol. 79, p. 1836.

² Han Yu, “Miscellanies (*za zhu*),” in *The Complete Works of Han Yu (hanchangli quanji)* (Beijing: China Bookstore Press, 1991), chapt. 11, p. 178.

³ Han Yu, “Miscellanies (*za zhu*),” in *The Complete Works of Han Yu (hanchangli quanji)* (Beijing: China Bookstore Press, 1991), chapt. 11, pp. 174–175.

alien tradition had not been introduced into China before the Three Dynasties of the Xia, the Shang and the Zhou (*sandai*) when the great Chinese saints might have rectified its fallacies. Not being inoculated from this alien Buddhism, the Chinese affiliates had been mentally polluted “to be renegades of their lives and morality, falling into self contempt”.⁴ Han argued with the ridiculous stories of Emperor Liang Wu (*liang wudi*) at the South and North Dynasties (A.D.420–A.D.589), who abdicated his throne to be converted into a monk at temple, leaving his country in tragedy of Hou Jin Turmoil. In the end the emperor monk died of starvation and his country was demolished from the political arena. Han then pointed out the peril of Buddhism to China in that “the Buddhist mentality is established at the sacrifice of the unity of families and country, disrupting natural laws at its coherence.” To remedy this alien fallacy of life philosophy, Han intentionally marked out an essay in the Book of Proprieties as *The Great Learning*, which might construct a universal mentality for scholars to the initiative from cultivating right mind into a harmonious world. In his clue there were too many Buddhist enlightened individuals spoiling their families and countries, Shakyamuni Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, Bodhidharma, the First Patriarch of Chinese Chan Lineage and Emperor Liang Wu were such destroyers of both their families and thrones. In contrast, in Confucian tradition we had too many saints uniting families and countries, and eventually benefiting the world under the heaven. They were the heroes filing from Emperor Yao, Emperor Shun, Emperor Yu, King Zhou Wu, King Zhou Wen, the Prince Regent Zhou Gong, to Confucius and Mencius. According to Han Yu, after Mencius the Confucian genealogy had been devoid of great saints, resulting in the loss of Confucian Dao and the Buddhist intrusion into China. In order to carry out the Confucian mission to interdict the spread of alien Buddhism, Han Yu offended Emperor Xian Zong by openly denouncing his pro-Buddhist policies. His ideological commitment to Confucianism invited severe punishment from the Emperor Xian Zong by being ostracized to barbarian southern area Chao Zhou and died there in great despair. Yet another master writer Su Shi, possibly the most influential poet in the Song Dynasty, eulogized his commitment with unusual respect: “his style of essay rescued the deterioration of genre for eight generations, his ideology salvaged the moral grace of Chinese, his loyalty encouraged him to aggravate His Majesty and his resolution motivated him to despise an army of troops,”⁵ typical of The Will of Cosmologically-oriented Individual (*pifuzhizhi*) proposed by Confucius and mentality of The Determination of Immensity (*haoranzhiqi*) advocated by Mencius.

Academically, the Tang Dynasty was inevitably associated with the prosperity of Chinese Buddhism, and identically what the Song Dynasty was related to the

⁴ Han Yu, “On Worshipping Buddha’s Bone, Proposals (*biao zhuan, lun fo gu biao*),” in *The Complete Works of Han Yu* (*hanchangli quanji*) (Beijing: China Bookstore Press, 1991), chapt. 39, p. 457.

⁵ Su Shi, “Notes on Rebuilding Memorial Hall for Han Yu in Chaozhou (*chaozhou xiu han wengong miao ji*),” in *The Complete Works of Su Dongpo* (*sudongpo quanji*) (Beijing: China Bookstore Press, 1986), Vol. 2, p. 373.

affluence of Neo-Confucianism. Therefore, in the Northern Song Dynasty, Han Yu's reputation had been substantially elevated and his endeavor to promote *the Great Learning* as Confucian sutra was honestly appreciated and translated into scholastic tutoring. In the Middle of the Northern Song Dynasty, Cheng Yi, the junior of Cheng Brothers, made a retreat to his Yi Gao Academy after his frustrated administration and stayed there for almost 20 years, tutoring with The Four Books, authentic of *the historical records* that *The Great Learning*, *The Doctrine of the Mean*, *The Analects of Confucius*, and *The Works of Mencius* were designated parallel as Confucian Classics. In his tutoring schedule, The Four Books were bestowed with the equal importance to The Five Classics (*wujing*) decreed since the Han and Tang Dynasties. Yet Cheng Yi suggested that he belonged to another intellectual line initiated from Mencius down to his brother Cheng Hao, the senior of the Cheng Brothers. According to him, this peculiar intellectual tradition "is reestablished by my brother who renovated Confucian Six Classics (*liu jing*) after an erudite exploration into the Hundred Schools of Thought as well as Taoism and Buddhism for almost ten years. His originative scholarship combines natural order with human ethics, referring cosmic dynamics to life ethics at family level and associating proprieties and music as social norms with natural order in evolution. His theory made a clear cut in diversified arguments and enlightened the obscurities for hundred generations, attaining a new theoretic horizon since the Qin and Han Dynasties. The academic situation after Mencius' decease has thus far turned to a rigorous revival at his disposal."⁶ In his evaluation to his brother's contribution he defamed Taoism and Buddhism as derailed schools of thought, hinting that his brother had surpassed intellectually all the Confucian scholars in both the Han and Tang Dynasties, hence reviving the Confucian scholarship for cultivating great saints by inheriting Mencius' spirit of cosmic piety and its revelation in secular proprieties and music as social norms.

In the Southern Song Dynasty, Zhu Xi made a self-esteeming statement for his academic mission to integrate ancient saints, Confucius, Mencius and the Cheng Brothers. In the biographies of major Confucian Scholars in History of Song, Zhu Xi was thereby highly appreciated, "Zhu Xi has succeeded into the authentic tradition of the Cheng Brothers since the Southern Song Dynasty, his scholarship thus enormously enriched. For him speculation on objective knowledge is the base for scholarship, but its focus should be fixed distinctively on ethical cultivation for a perfect person. Through him the Confucian tradition being formed in *The Book of Poetry* and *The Book of History*, in the texts of Six Training Skills, and in the *Analects of Confucius* and *the Works of Mencius* had survived the Fire of Qin, which had all ancient classics set on fire by Emperor Qin. Even after the Fire of Qin, Confucian scholars in the Han Dynasty were rather conservative in confining their exploration only within language techniques concerning Confucian Classics

⁶ Zhu Xi, Lū Zuqian and Jiang Yong, "Annotations to Current Reflections(*jinsilu, ji zhu*)," in *The Four Categories in Chinese Cultural Essentials (sibu jingyao)* (Shanghai: Shanghai Classic Press, 1993), Vol. 12, chapt. 14, p. 1185.

instead of their value orientation. That is why Zhu Xi is considered directly associated with Mencius, overtaking the academics of other scholars rather than Confucian scholars.”⁷ Zhu Xi himself also acknowledged his academic mission to this assessment, stating that Confucian scholars in the Han Dynasty were confined in “trifling learning” (*xiaoxue*), which is not eligible for a scholar to become great person. In his judgment, the Daoist metaphysics in the Wei and Jin Dynasties is unable to save China from being split by barbarian invasion and domestic rebellions, the transcendent fantasies of Buddhism in the Sui and Tang Dynasties can not compete with Confucianism in social morality enhancement. Therefore the only way to rule the world and bring peace to human beings is to restore to the regular track of Confucian cultivation of personality, family unity, ruling of country and harmonizing the world under the heaven (*xiu, qi, zhi, ping*).

The essay *the Great Learning* in the Book of Proprieties, even less than 2000 words, must be apprehended as guidelines for an intellectual tradition according to Zhu Xi. Therefore he divided the *Great Learning* into two parts, Right Classic (*you jing*) with 205 words in one chapter and Explanatory Notes (*zhuan*) with 1546 words in ten chapters, matching with the Confucian tradition in apprehending Classics with explanatory notes, similar to the situation apprehending *Yi Jing* or *the Book of Changes* by Explanatory Notes of Yi Zhuan. This apprehending policy is often referred to as exploring metaphysical imports by concise words (*weiyandayi*).

In its true sense, “great learning” (*da xue*) means knowledge to cultivate great saints, contrary to “trifling learning” (*xiao xue*) meant to craftsmanship. So Confucian Scholarship in the Han Dynasty (*han xue*) is often labeled as “trifling learning”, catering to words verification and annotation, while Confucian Scholarship in the Song Dynasty is highly respected as “philosophical reflections” (*yili zhi xue*), tending to ethical sense and universal truth beyond words. Therefore Confucian Scholarship in the Song Dynasty advocated by Cheng Brothers and Zhu Xi comes into the category of “great learning (*daxue*)”, aiming at transforming person mentally and cultivating person into great saints. Zhu Xi himself thus explained: “Those vulgar Confucian scholars are confined in taking words by heart and sticking to stereotypes of writing, being attainable in trifling learning instead of mental enhancement, the alien Buddhism pertaining to Nirvana ignores substantial lives, hypocritically transcendent of great learning, and the rest of other doctrines are too calculated to justify social morality, alluring people into fooling each other and ruining civilian faith for mutual love and trust. In consequence, it is misfortune for country leaders excluded from learning universal rule as well as for the ruled ribbed off the social peace. The natural world is dark and dull, falling prey to irregularity, and as being detrimentally transplanted to human history, we have the most detestable and corruptive politics in the Later Liang, the Later Tang,

⁷ Tuo Tuo, “Biographies in DaoScholarship, The History of the Song Dynasty (*songshi, daoxue zhuan*),” in *The Twenty-Four Histories* (Version of Simplified Chinese) (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju Press, 2000) Vol. 427, pp. 9937–9938.

the Later Jin, the Later Han and the Later Zhou or the Five Dynasties (*wudai*).⁸ In this assessment, Zhu Xi traced the reason of glaring disgrace in the Chinese intellectuals and the most vulnerable state power to “trifling learning” of Confucian Scholarship in the Han Dynasty (*han xue*), Buddhism in the Sui and Tang Dynasties as well as other perverted fringes of thoughts, obviously contrary to Confucian doctrines of uniting politics with natural orders. Therefore, Confucian scholars in the Song Dynasty began to introduce the contents of *the Great Learning*, which was primarily excavated by Han Yu, into life philosophy for tutorship. And when Zhu Xi was intentionally rehabilitated from oblivion by Li Zong Emperor in the Southern Song Dynasty, *the Great Learning* was officially decreed as one of the four major texts for national civil service examinations and his annotations were basically the standard answers for grading the concerned candidates.

The Three Principles and Their Political-Ethical Explanation

The annotation to “great learning” was divided by Zhu Xi into two parts: chief content in one chapter and its explanations in ten chapters. The expressions for the term “great learning” in the first three sentences were described as the Three Principles for the whole texts of *the Great Learning*, these were “reflections upon cosmic dynamics, assuming-new-person and halting at consummation” and the further explanations to this principal expression were thus termed as Eight Items, these were “observing, comprehending, adjusting, rationalizing, self regulating, family establishing, country ruling, and world harmonizing.” And the unity between Three Principles and Eight Items constituted the quintessence of chief content in 205 words, and the rest of the explanations to the *Great Learning* of later Confucian scholars were mainly associated with this quintessence.

Concerning The Three Principles, Zhu Xi had this evaluation: “The items before self-regulating are all related to reflections upon cosmic dynamics, while the items after family establishing to assuming-new-person. And observing and comprehending mean where reflections halt. The items after adjusting represent the order of respective halt.”⁹ Since he did not offer more detailed explanations, I should consider his explanations in this respect rather far-fetched and arbitrary. In contrast, I would rather agree with the explanations done to The Three Principles by the *Great Learning* itself, which made the relations between the principles and their explanations coherent: “reflections upon cosmic dynamics” represents

⁸ Zhu Xi, “Preface to Great Learning (*da xue xu*),” in *Annotations to The Four Books by Zhu Xi* (Si Shu Ji Zhu)(Changsha: Yuelu Press, 1987), pp. 2–3.

⁹ Zhu Xi, “Annotations to the Great Learning (*daxue zhangju*),” in *Annotations to The Four Books by Zhu Xi* (*sishu jizhu*) (Changsha: Yuelu Press, 1987), p. 7.

human understanding the universal drive for its natural evolution, “assuming-new-person” represents person being transformed physically and metaphysically by his sustained intellectual endeavor, and “halting at consummation” represents the integration of constant human efforts with the eternal social and natural development. The interaction and mutual improvements thus reveal the general human reflections on nature and society of Confucian ethical tradition.

Reflections upon cosmic dynamics have two repetitive words in Chinese as “ming”, the first “ming” being a verb representing human intellectual endeavor and the second “ming” being an adjective defining cosmic dynamics, which demonstrates that cosmic dynamics is accessible and comprehensible by human intellectual endeavor. In the philosophy before the Qin Dynasty, the cosmic dynamics was described as the unity between physical objects (*de*) and metaphysical universal principle (*dao*, the original term of *tao* in Chinese Taoism), so the comprehensible world, both natural and social, was popularly apprehended as the combined term Dao De. Contemporary Chinese philosopher Feng Youlan analyzed the term as “the universal dynamics is termed metaphysical Dao, and its representations in millions of physical objects are termed De. In the Reflections Part I by Guan Zi (*guanzi xinshu shang*), the invisible universal God will enter a physical body in his omnipresent movement somehow, so the phrase ‘De is the house of Dao’ means De is the physical evidence of Dao at certain space and time, this physical evidence being either human beings or substantial objects.”¹⁰ “De” in Chinese can mean both human moral quality and natural representation, similar to Kant’s representation to the thing-in-itself. So when Chinese term “De Dao”, the speaker really means acquiring natural knowledge and morally qualified. In the time of Confucius and Mencius, Confucian scholars targeted their interest mainly on the moral facets of Dao De while Daoist scholars on the natural facets of Dao De. That is why when we read the texts of Confucian scholars we often come across the phrase such as “to guide politics by De” (*weizhengyide*) and “to counterbalance the political position by morality” (*yide kangwei*), resulted in the moral transcendence of De over the natural principle of De, and hence constituting an ethic-oriented intellectual tradition of Confucianism. With this ethically intellectual shift, Confucian scholars often combined De with Dao as Dao De, with Proprieties as Proprieties based on De (the rule of *de li*) and with humanity as human-morality (*ren de*), these coined terms tended to transmit ethic message of Confucian school of thought. In Zhu Xi, the Confucian ethic motive and political aim had been more closely linked in analyzing the phrase in the *Great Learning* “a country leader should first of all be conscious of the universal ethic” as the fundamental principle of human social and political life. In his cosmic structure, De was the representative of Dao Being, and the governed people and properties in a country were the representatives of De beings. Therefore the Contrast between Dao Being and De beings (*benmo zhi bian*) in Zhu Xi’s cosmo-political picture

¹⁰ Feng Youlan, *The Complete Works of ThreePines Hall* (*sansongtang quanji*) (Zhengzhou: Henan People’s Press, 2000), Vol. 8, p. 435.

reveals their respective merits or demerits: “Take Dao Being as principle and De beings as its social applications, then the country’s social property would aggregate. If the country leader reversed this order, grabbing the ruled off their properties, then the ruled could flee from his governance. If he followed the natural order respecting each individual his natural right, then people like natural beings would be contending to be his subjects.”¹¹ In his political philosophy, Zhu Xi posited subjects before lands and properties, hinting at the importance of morality instead of profits. If a political leader competes with his people by taking lands and properties from their possession, he may easily accumulate the amount of properties, yet destroying the allegiance of his people henceforth. Such maneuver is the “reversed politics” for a country. Zhu Xi, in this reflection concerning “cosmic dynamics”, revived the tradition of Confucius’ “cosmic obligation over worldly benefits” and Mencius’ “people’s right over king’s power” by highlighting Confucian ethics in natural world and pragmatic politics.

The second phrase in the Three Principles is the “assuming-new-person”. In the original phrase the word “new” had two implications, one for loving people, and another for new aspects of people’s life. Both Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi took the second implication as the convincing explanation for “new”, agreeable to the additional expressions in the following texts as “the life in the natural world is assuming new each day like a bathing recorded in Tang’s Decree (*pan ming*, warning engraved on the bathing tub of Emperor Tang in the Shang Dynasty)”, “to live a new person everyday in Kang Decree (*kang gao*, the Duke Zhou Gong’s Announcement to his brother, the regent to rule the conquered in the Shang Dynasty)” and “Although Zhou being an ancient state, the ordinance lighted on it was new in *The Book of Poetry*”. Therefore, Zhu Xi suggested that a political leader should do his utmost in renovating all his business. The Book of Proprieties was in fact the collections of Confucian disciples before the Qin Dynasty, its themes being pertinent to patriarchal systems in ancient China and its social-political ethics. In the perspective of social-political context and Confucian tradition, “the way to *the Great Learning*” can be understood as the way to become a saint, so its learning tinged with Confucian political ethics. Therefore the Three Principles of reflections upon cosmic dynamics, assuming-new-person and halting at consummation are the prerequisites to political personality of Confucian style. In Confucian political structure, human reflections upon cosmic dynamics reveal the faith of Confucian scholars in the mandate of Heaven, the symbol of natural rationality after which human rationality strictly follows. By this integrating human rationality with natural rationality, Confucian scholars would rather demonstrate their historical and cosmic mission as saints, that is, to carry out the political mission in Heaven’s stead (*titianxingdao*). In Confucian political ideology, “assuming-new-person” is a life pursuit based on self-consciousness, similar to bathing everyday for a new spiritual complexion. When the master Confucian

¹¹ Zhu Xi, “Annotations to the Great Learning (*daxue zhangju*),” in *Annotations to The Four Books by Zhu Xi (sishu jizhu)* (Changsha: Yuelu Press, 1987), p. 17.

scholar Wang Fuzhi in the early Qing Dynasty claimed that “I am obliged by the Six Classics for a new spiritual complexion” (*liujing zewo kaishengmian*), he testified the same political consciousness. Even before The Book of Proprieties was compiled, the Confucian scholars took faith in “The Revolutions conducted by Tang Shang and Zhou Wuwang to overthrow their respective emperors were human testimonies of Heaven’s holy mandates.”¹² Although life philosophy in Confucian social revolution favored the overthrow of both the despotic tyrants in the Xia and Shang Dynasties, their political endeavors were severely criticized as “violence against violence” by conservative politicians in the overthrown government. But in *the Book of Poetry*, Confucian scholars defended their favorable social revolutions by quoting the phrase “Although Zhou was an ancient state, the ordinance lighted on it was new.” This political justification is also confirmed and assured from the natural rationality as revealed in Heaven’s mandate. In Chinese political tradition, it has been an intellectual challenge as how to distinguish between the transfer of power by “violence against violence” and by “violating against legitimate authorities”, but the writer of *The Book of Poetry* in the Zhou Dynasty provided an excellent solution to it in “ancient state with new ordinance”. The reason for the power shift by Zhou’s revolution was that Zhou state, although only a western remote dukedom, had conducted justified campaigns for the Heaven’s mandate, that is, not for human speculation but for universal doctrine revealed in both natural and social rationalities. These rationalities reincarnated on political saints of Confucian style, pertinent to the phrase of assuming-new-person. The same message of life philosophy for Confucian politicians can also be apprehended on the name of Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the founder of the modern Republic of China, which in his native dialect meaning “assuming-new-person” and his family style name De Ming, meaning testifying cosmic dynamics. Even Communist leader Mao Ze-dong initiated his revolutionary activities by organizing “Society for Assuming-New-Persons” (*xinmin xuehui*) when he was young, aiming at reconstructing China and the world. These are the evidences of Confucian doctrine in the influence on the life philosophies of modern Chinese revolutionaries.

The last one in the Three Principles of the *Great Learning* is “halting at consummation”. In fact, halting in this context means “no stop before being perfect”, hinting at Confucian philosophical bent on eternal pursuit of self-realization. In the “Universal Ruling” (*li yun*) of “the Book of Proprieties” there was political agenda to demonstrate political goal for Confucian scholars in “cosmic doctrine is visible in only universal common welfare”, which also reveals the ethical imports of natural rationality. The same conscience of life philosophy was felt by Sima Qian, the father of Chinese historiography, when he exclaimed his life desire as “eagerly attempting the impossible” by responding to the statements of “a truly high mountain being as high as high can be, a truly grand boulevard being as grand as grand can be” (*gao shan yang zhi, jing hang xing zhi*) in *the Book of*

¹² Tuan Ci, *The Book of Changes* (*zhouyi, tuanci*).

Poetry. From his exclamation we come to understand the logic that the eternity in cosmic dynamics is the highest goal of life philosophy into which each individual drive can finally be emptied, this finality being the desired halting. The parallel sense is seen in rivers and creeks emptied into ocean, with each individual being halted desirably at being embraced into oblivion in sea waters. Just like individual rivers and creeks with ocean as their common finality, Confucian political life philosophy also takes human ethics revealed in natural rationality or cosmic dynamics as its universal goal under the heaven (*tianxia datong*), a vivid expression also made in Confucian classic *The Doctrine of the Mean*: “All beings can prosper without harming each other, just like cosmic dynamics enlivens each individual being fairly; small creeks flowing freely mirror the universal evolution, the exact message thus being transmitted by Heaven and Earth.”¹³ Therefore the Confucian life philosophy designed for a political leader is concisely derived from Male Heaven and Female Earth, their union being the source of all beings under the heaven. The Confucian political consummation is hence expressed in the Integration between Heaven and Human. This model of life philosophy for political ethics was later explained by Confucian scholars in the Song Dynasty as “There is universal rule for all beings on the Earth. For being a father, his rule is defined in being benevolent to his children; for being a child, his rule final to his parents; for a country leader his rule humanistic to his subjects; for being a subject, his rule respective to his leader. This balance between power and right, and between obligation and responsibility constitute the universal consummation for human endeavor to halt at. Abiding by or violating this rule will bring about either benefit or disaster. If a Saint can govern all beings or things harmoniously, he just follows this universal rule instead of creating any rule of his own initiative.”¹⁴ A Saint in Confucian tradition, unlike the God as law-giver in the western tradition, is the one who just apprehends the natural rationality and then applies it appropriately in social ethics and political institutions, and such anticipation tells the ultimate objective of Confucian scholarship of becoming saints. So “halting at consummation” physically means a sustained drive in human pursuit of perfect life, catering to “a self-realized role model” (*li renji*) in Zhou Dunyi’s “A saint should aspire to be heavenly blessed”, “A gentleman should aspire to be saint” and “A person should aspire to be gentleman”¹⁵ According to Confucian life philosophy, scholar is designed for becoming saint, with his volition halting only at the extreme of being a metaphysical man. In physical sense, this volition will never be able to materialize, so he must keep on his pursuit without halt. Such life philosophy proposed by Confucian “halting at consummation” can in certain

¹³ *The Doctrine of the Mean, The Book of Proprieties (liji, zhongyong)* (Changsha: Yuelu Press, 1989), chapt. 31, p. 500.

¹⁴ Zhu Xi, Lū Zuqian and Jiang Yong, “Annotations to Current Reflections (*jinsilu jizhu*),” in *The Four Categories in Chinese Cultural Essentials (sibu jingyao)* (Shanghai: Shanghai Classic Press, 1993), Vol. 12, chapt. 8, p. 1171.

¹⁵ Zhou Dunyi, “Volition (*zhi xue*),” in *Universal Scholarship (tong shu)* (Shanghai: Shanghai Classic Press, 1992), pp. 14–15.

sense be compared to the faith harbored by western affiliates to God, who is the absolute otherness to aspire after forever, but reincarnated only in Jesus Christ. That's why Confucian scholars translated Catholic from modern Jesuits' introduction into The Religion of Heaven Master (*tianzhujiao*), hinting at the non-materialized pursuit of life philosophy.

Conscience of One: Political Personality with Cosmic-Ethical Feature

Great Learning is the scholarship for Great Person. The statement embodied in The Three Principles is further complemented by concrete "eight items", that is, observing, comprehending, adjusting, rationalizing, self regulating, family establishing, country ruling and world harmonizing. In these eight items, the first four items mainly concern with human subjective awareness and endeavor while the other four items the political obligation and mission for human beings as social identities. They also bear the contrast between internal psychological volition and external social action for human beings. And this contrast also testifies the harmony between natural order and social rule as advocated by Confucian scholars. The master Confucian scholar Wang Yangming in the Ming Dynasty had explained this correlation that "Great Learning is the scholarship for becoming great person designed by ancient Confucian scholars, If I should tell you the sense of reflecting on cosmic dynamics, I should confess that a great person is one who regards everything between heaven and earth as One, all people under the heaven belong to a same family and the whole China is the embodiment of a person. If someone eventually makes any difference between natural beings, between countries and between diversified Chinese, he is then a person of small-caliber."¹⁶ In his analysis we come to realize that the difference between Great Person and Person of Small-Caliber does not lie in their observing and comprehending, but in their integrating epistemological capacity with social obligation to harmonize the whole world. Such integration identifies the ideal political personality of Confucian style, spotlighting the subjective conscience of Great Person, that is, the Conscience of One (*shen du*).

The Conscience of One can equally be understood as worshipping cosmo-transcendent-oneness. But how the concept of Great Person is associated with it? The reason can be this: Since there are popular situations of persons of small-caliber in high positions and of inflicted disgrace upon Great Person, we could not distinguish them from the perspective of social positions or powers possessed. These social, phenomenal features should be isolated from their personal

¹⁶ Wang Yangming, *The Complete Works of Wang Yangming* (*wangyangming quanji xia*), Vol. II, edit. by Wu Guang, Qian Ming, Dong Ping and Yao Yanfu, (Shanghai: Shanghai Classic Press, 1992), chapt. 26, p. 968.

qualifications before Confucian life philosophy can be fully appreciated. Then a greater natural frame than social institutions has been introduced into Confucian life philosophy system, that is, cosmo-oriented frame. A great person is thought to be identical to universal doctrine in natural rationality rather than social and political status, being justified by Conscience of One transcending all social and political attributes. The spirituality of cosmos as One is the most valuable source for a Great Person to defy all social material attractions and perplexities, since this cosmic One should be worshipped as the ultimate dynamics for all physical existence including power, wealth, fame and bodies. But life philosophy in Buddhism is simply based on epistemological sophistication with no social obligations but individual psychological salvation. Such other-worldly life philosophy is opposite to this-worldly one of Confucian style, being satirized by Wang Yangming in his poem: “One is metaphysical Being transcending all physical attributes, yet testifying itself the cosmos-particle. Yet those Chinese Buddhist affiliates are ridiculous to a wonder in ignoring their intellectual treasure by following shabby Buddhist doctrines.”¹⁷ The first part of this poem tells the importance of cosmopolitan ontology in individual faith, while the second part satirized the alienation of Chinese believers converted into Indian Buddhism. In safeguarding this-worldly life philosophy we line Wang Yangming with Han Yu and Zhu Xi in the same tradition stressing social obligations for human beings and Confucian epistemology featured with political ethics. In the social upheaval, especially at the juncture of alien assaults on Chinese culture and politics from Buddhism and Mongolian tribes respectively at the Song and Ming Dynasties, Confucian scholars were more willingly to prone to the Conscience of One as spiritual justification or transcending ideology to mobilize and consolidate Chinese people. To reinforce this religious commitment, Liu Zongzhou, an outstanding Confucian politician in the late Ming Dynasty, purposely compiled a book named *Genealogy of Human Beings*, in the hope to call attention to the social responsibilities of “carrying out Heaven’s mandate”: “The epistemological tradition from ancient Confucian scholars has been exposed to the Conscience of One repeatedly. If one can conceive of this Universal One, he is equally conscious of universal nature and reason for every material beings coming into existence. If one follows the doctrine of this Universal One, he certainly can understand and manage all things under the heaven.”¹⁸ To him, the prerequisite to political personality is to be conscious of this universal nature and integrate it with all physical beings including human undertakings. In this logic, whether a Confucian scholar will actualize his political idea is not so urgent as to that he should be fully aware of this cosmic conscience and social commitment. For any person lacks of this cosmic conscience may abuse

¹⁷ Wang Yangming, *The Complete Works of Wang Yangming* (*wangyangming quanji shang*), Vol. I, edit. by Wu Guang, Qian Ming, Dong Ping and Yao Yanfu, (Shanghai: Shanghai Classic Press, 1992), chapt. 20, p. 790.

¹⁸ Liu Zongzhou, “Key Points in Human Testimony, Genealogy of Human Beings (*ren pu, zhengren yaozhi*),” in *The Complete Works of Liu Zongzhou*(*liuzongzhou quanji*), edit. by Wu Guang (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Classic Press, 2007), Vol. 2, p. 5.

universal doctrine to his private advantage by all tricks and means. Therefore the Confucian advocacy of cosmic dynamics in the Conscience of One is positive to constructing political personality to avoid the abuse of social and political powers. The contemporary Confucian scholar Mou Zongsan was smart in observing Liu Zongzhou's reflections on the Conscience of One: "Liu's scholarship on the Conscience of One contains two aspects: one on epistemological sphere and another on universal natural sphere."¹⁹ In his analysis, epistemological sphere represents subjective self-identity and positive consciousness, and universal natural sphere metaphysical Being or Confucian religious commitment to Heaven's mandate which we may easily associate to Mencius's phrase "a full comprehending will invariably lead to universal nature and finally to Heaven's mandate". Here we have a distinctive connection between cosmic dynamics and life philosophy of social and political feature. And this distinction also helps delineate the opposite life purpose between Buddhist epistemological enlightenment and Confucian self-cultivation, the former being for individual escape from social anxieties as Nirvana and the later for social involvement as carrying out Heaven's mandate.

The absolute One as Dao bears original sense of metaphysical Being, the universal doctrine to initiate all physical beings, its transcendent merits being perceived by Chinese thinkers in these popular terms as "apprehending Dao" (*zhi dao*), "hearing Dao" (*wen dao*) and "Seeing One in mind's eyes" (*jian du*), but these spheres of One are not enough to meet with Confucian demands for political personality, instead they anticipate epistemological and universal natural sphere to be enhanced to harmonize with social and ethical sphere as to disclose the superiorities of Confucian life philosophy over that of Buddhism and Taoism. Like Buddhist Nirvana, the merits of Dao in Daoist philosophy confining itself only in objective natural qualifications, which, compared to Confucian active social responsibilities, are obviously negative and lack of social enthusiasm: "A Daoist saint will forget social power in three day's meditation. He will continue to forget physical beings in seven day's meditation, and he continues to forget life itself in nine day's meditation. And if he forgets his life, he finally comes to see through all things in the universe, this is the sphere of being conscious of One. The Conscience of One thus helps a Daoist in being free from the distinction between being ancient and modern, and between life and death."²⁰ The life philosophy for a Daoist saint is to achieve absolute freedom in spirit when his intellectual capacity is testified by the Conscience of One, but Confucian scholars still feel unsatisfactory with spiritual reunion with nature as suggested in Taoism, they still feel obliged to expand cosmic dynamics to human society in accomplishing universal fairness and freedom, this is what they call "balanced universality" (*jie ju zhi dao*): "What you feel repugnant from the ruler, never enforce it to the ruled; what you feel repugnant from the ruled, never contrive to serve the ruler; what you feel

¹⁹ Mou Zongshan, *Nineteen Lectures on Chinese Philosophy* (Shanghai: Shanghai Classic Press, 1997), p. 394.

²⁰ The Master Scholar, *The Works of Zhuang Zi* (*zhuangzi, dazongshi*).

repugnant from the previous, never impose it on the later; what you feel repugnant from the later, never attribute it to the previous; what you feel repugnant from the right, never refer it to the left; what you feel repugnant from the left, never pass it to the right.”²¹ The doctrine of Confucian balanced universality was borrowed by Yan Fu, the Confucian scholar in the late Qing Dynasty and most well-known translator of various western social works, in comprehending freedom and equity in modern western political philosophy: “What we call freedom is the reasonable aspiration, which sees no restriction otherwise in an isolated natural status. In such unrestricted natural status, one is free to do evil or good. But in human society, this unrestricted freedom has met with paradox as one’s freedom at the cost of others’. Therefore, in human society, the natural freedom must be rectified to freedom without abusing the others’. This is what balanced universality in *the Great Learning* transmits, and based on which can a political leader rule harmoniously the world.”²² In the Chinese tradition, the absolute fairness and freedom is always being exhibited in natural evolution, the exposition is observed as “Dao provides universal dynamic for physical beings, De represents Dao in concrete physical beings, the physical beings (*wu*) constitute observable things, their potentials (*shi*) help make what these physical beings substantially tangible.”²³ In Lao Zi’s Daoist philosophy, the natural fairness, justice and freedom is self exhibiting in human society, but Confucian scholars maintain these social values revealed in natural evolution must be fully apprehended, appreciated and transformed through human sustained intelligent efforts and moral consciousness. In this political and ethical context, Confucian scholars targeted the Conscience of One as political personality for being Great Person. For life philosophy in Confucian tradition we have a very popular saying that “The Cosmic Dynamic is affluent in bringing about everything, so a gentleman in the same spirit may accomplish whatever may be accomplished” (*tian xing jian, junzi yi ziqiang buxi*).²⁴ We may also link this life philosophy to the humanistic indication embedded in the Conscience of One. In Confucian cosmology Absolute One (*du*) originally suggested only the transcending negative Onto, opposite to the active Onto in Universal Dynamics (*cheng*) as phrased in Perfect Universal Dynamics never ceases to help produce in the cosmos (*zhichengwuxi*). From the invigoration in cosmic dynamics Confucian life philosophy may deduce its advertised social fairness and equity for common welfare, at which the Conscience of One in the *Great Learning* would eventually drive, coinciding with the humanistic spirituality and social responsibility in “adjusting” (gentleman’s motive). Such highly motivated life philosophy in Confucian political tradition provides an indicative clue for conceiving “great” in Great Person

²¹ Great Learning, *The Book of Proprieties* (*lij, daxue*) (Changsha: Yuelu Press, 1989), chapt. 42, p. 533.

²² Yan Fu, “Preface to the Translation,” in *On Liberty by John Stuart* (Chinese Version), trans. by Yan Fu (Beijing: Commercial Press, 1981), p. vii.

²³ Chapter 51, *The Works of Lao Zi*.

²⁴ Phenomenon to Heaven, *The Book of Changes* (*zhouyi, qian xiang*).

and for compromising with the admonishment set for life goal as “Aspiring to be great in life” (*xian li hu qi da*). Therefore we may be less confused with the concept of Confucianism in the statement that a person is a minimized cosmos while cosmos a maximized person. Much like Plato’s philosopher-king, a Great Person in Confucian context may not be necessarily a guy of high rank, but a person with cosmic sense of motivation. Disloyal to this cosmic sense, an emperor may decline into a selfish guy abusing people’s rights, to be consequently executed by Heaven’s mandate like emperor Xia Jie and emperor Shang Zhou, while reinforced by this cosmic sense any plebeian can become great person, metaphorically standing on earth and heading the beam of heaven.

Some Comments

Confucius once claimed that “A statesperson should have three to worship: to worship heaven’s mandate, to worship great person and to worship saint’s teachings.”²⁵ I read from his exclamation to realize that worship or religious commitment comes first in Confucian life philosophy or self realization. In this religious commitment, heaven’s mandate represents natural rationality and fairness in cosmopolitan evolution. The second point is that we should also respect those great persons with cosmic morality and physical talents, and finally we should hold in awe the saints, whose moral teachings constitute the value orientation for us to evaluate statespersons in history. In Confucian context, saints are definitely referred to those saint kings before and in the Three Dynasties of the Xia, the Shang and the Zhou or the Pre-Qin Dynasties. The saint kings, to be enthroned either by other’s self abdication or self-initiated revolution, all proposed “common wealth for all under the heaven” as the paramount political principles, their interpreting and accomplishing those principles demonstrated their political philosophy, these are what saint’s teachings, opposite to the revealed truth or objective self-evident truth in the western tradition. Therefore both Confucian “three worships” and “great person” in the *Great Learning*, would have “common benefits for all under the heaven” as their life philosophy featured by universal ethics, and Confucian styled statespersons have all committed themselves to this tradition conspicuously.

Compared to the other-worldly life philosophy of Buddhism, the political personality of Confucian “universal benevolence over individual profits” (*dag-ongwusi*) expresses its ostensible sense of social responsibilities. Although Buddhism is also renowned for its “universal salvation”, but its life philosophy is strictly confined by individual enlightenment, encouraging its practitioner to shun from all social affiliations. We could hardly refuse the logical reference that if everyone were converted into a Buddhist by avoiding family and social

²⁵ Ji Shi, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, jishi*).

obligations, then life and social relations would have ceased to exist when Nirvana had overwhelmed the earth. With a complete Nirvana on the Earth, the whole world would eventually be devoid of physical vitality and mental volition. Quite opposite to it, Confucian life philosophy bases itself on invigorating cosmic dynamics to stress the unity between the natural eternality of life and human enthusiastic spirituality, bestowing such unity with a great person in his political ideology to strive for the universal benefits under the heaven. And this is exactly what Confucian this-worldly life philosophy intends to convey.

Before the Buddhist introduction into the Sui and Tang Dynasties, Confucian political and ethical philosophy fixed its attention mainly on the “Three Principles and Five Constants” (*san gang wu chang*), their interrelations being not conspicuous in cosmology, epistemology and life philosophy. But after surviving the Buddhist challenge expressed in The Buddhist Three Seals of the Dharma concerning the cohesion between epistemology and life philosophy, Confucian scholars had been able to discover the peculiar merits harbored in “Great Learning” to integrate cosmology with epistemology of ethical characteristics, complementing “Three Principles and Five Constants” with “Three Principles and Eight Items” underlining Confucian ethical aspects in cosmology and epistemology. Thanks to the creative transformation for Confucian ethics in connecting cosmology and epistemology, all three branches of Confucianism in the Song Dynasty (*li* as the universality, *xin* as Cosmic epistemology and *qi* as Cosmic matter) had contributed their respective explanations to Neo-Confucianism. The attention called to the Conscience of One after the Song Neo-Confucians had gained superiority as moral personality over the legalist instrumentalism in Chinese monarchy politics, enhancing a more comprehensive consciousness about political power among Chinese civilians and hence imposing “common benefits over individual profits” on all statespersons in Chinese political arena.

Chapter 20

Natural Justice and Its Political Implications in *The Doctrine of the Mean* (*zhong yong*)

Introduction

The Doctrine of the Mean (*zhongyong*) is one of the major Confucian classics focusing on natural justice and its political implications via cosmic dynamics (*cheng*) and its harmonious eternity. The rule of the saints modeling themselves after heaven's virtue is advocated as the so-called rule of person or rule of virtue, in which natural harmony in the cosmos is believed to be the manifestation of eternal and universal justice. Both the editors of this book in the Pre-Qin Dynasty and its commentators in the Tang Dynasty have availed themselves in repudiating Legalist utilitarianism abused in the despotic Qin Dynasty and Empty-World Thoughts of Buddhism prevalent in the Tang Dynasty by virtue of natural justice and cosmic fairness in Heaven-Mandated-Nature Theory. Their academic endeavors are directed at consolidating cosmological faith and moral fairness for Confucian political ideology in self-regulating, family establishing, country ruling and world harmonizing.

The Confucian Classic is a documentary ladder system comprising three basic rungs of The Four Books, The Five Classics, and The Thirteen Classics respectively. Such documentary system was meticulously organized by Confucian scholars in gradual enlargement in contextual amount and intellectual complication. In the incipient rung of The Four Books, two of which, i.e., *The Great Learning* and *The Doctrine of the Mean*, are just two essays in *The Book of Proprieties* (or *The Book of Rites*), one of *The Thirteen Classics* (*shi san jing*). These two essays were selected as independent papers by Confucian scholars in the Tang Dynasty and authorized to be Confucian Classics in the Song Dynasty. Being so selected and authorized by Confucian scholars, these essays were thought to be appropriate intellectual sources to meet the challenges from the alien Buddhist sutras, succinctly expressive of religious commitments indigenous to China, and political and legal principles of Confucian heritage. *The Great Learning* is focusing on how to cultivate oneself into a great person by the Integration between Heaven and Human, and *The Doctrine of the Mean* targets itself at natural justice and ideal politics in the rule of saints via principle of Confucian Heaven-Mandated-Nature Theory.

Intellectual Backdrop of *The Doctrine of the Mean*

The Doctrine of the Mean, which was in its origin only a short essay of less than 5000 words in the Book of Proprieties, far shorter in length than any of a modern dissertation, is gorgeously rich in its intellectual reflections and was extracted as an independent paper for study by Confucian scholars in the Tang Dynasty and annotated and listed as a one of The Four Books by Zhu Xi in the Song Dynasty, hence being decreed as compulsory textbook for civil service examinations for 600–700 years from the Southern Song Dynasty to the Late Qing Dynasty.

Though *the Book of Proprieties* was widely regarded as the compilation of Dai Sheng, a prestigious Confucian scholar on Zhou's proprieties, yet the major contents in each chapter revealed the stories obviously earlier than the Western Han Dynasty in which the compiler lived. But according to Professor Chen Yinke, the most reputable historian in twentieth century China, *The Doctrine of the Mean* as an essay in *the Book of Proprieties* should be the work of a Confucian scholar in the Qin Dynasty, which addressed itself mainly on cosmic dynamics (*cheng*) in integrating life philosophy with cosmology.¹ This cosmic dynamics was further explored by later Confucian scholars in expounding and testifying the natural justice advocated by Confucius as Heavenly Way or Heavenly Tao (*tiandao*) and the ideal political implications in the rule of saints, which were acknowledged as the secular representations of cosmological entity and natural laws based on Heaven-Mandated-Nature Theory.

During the Six Dynasties Period in Southern China between the Jin and Sui Dynasties from third to sixth Century A.D., Buddhism introduced from India was prevalent in China. Converted himself from a Daoist to a Buddhist, King Liang Wu or Xiao Yan in the Southern Dynasty justified himself in accepting the Buddha Nature Theory by referring to his own Chinese tradition in Heart-Nature Scholarship from *The Doctrine of the Mean*, but failed to extract its political and legal implications surpassing Buddhists in their stoicism. In the Tang Dynasty, the Buddhist cosmology based on Buddha Nature Theory and life philosophy based on Nirvana were gaining more popularity in China, their other-world oriented philosophy being blatantly contrary to Confucian philosophy of this-world. The

¹ In addressing the backcloth of The Great Learning and The Doctrine of the Mean, prof. Chen Yinke wrote: "In short, the essay of *the Great Learning* from *the Book of Proprieties* by Dai Sheng is stating the stereotyped doctrine of Confucian self-regulating, family establishing, country ruling and world harmonizing (*xiu qi zhi ping*), being simultaneously self-assumed representations of Confucian official scholars in the Late Eastern Han Dynasty. My judgment is not difficult to be documented in the Biographies of the Repudiated Confucian Officials in Book of Late Han and other relative documents. But before those days in Early Western Han Dynasty, what had been stated in the Great Learning was nothing more than an ideal life picture imagined and desired by Confucian scholars. So I would suggest the Great Learning to be the compilations of Confucian scholars before the Middle Han Dynasty, and the essay of The Doctrine of the Mean to be the work of Confucian scholars in Qin Dynasty. As for the authorship of The Doctrine of the Mean I have already explained in other paper, so I will rather stop here." See Chen Yinke, *Papers Assorted from Jin Ming Guan Manuscripts* (Shanghai: Shanghai Classic Press, 1980), p. 42.

alienated intellectual situation as such created a thrilling panic among Confucian scholars and Han Yu, one of the leading Confucian scholars at that time, purposefully chose one essay from *The Book of Proprieties*, namely *The Great Learning*, to refute Buddhism its cultivating heart and nature by abandoning family and society by Confucian doctrines in self-regulating, family establishing, country ruling and world harmonizing. Furthermore, another Confucian scholar at the same time named Li Ao, Han Yu's student as well as his intimate friend, extracted *The Doctrine of the Mean* from the same book or the Book of Proprieties advocating social justice and worldly rule revealed in the Heaven-Mandated-Nature and cosmological entity devoid of physical sounds and smells (*wusheng wuxiu*). Following the popular Buddhist conviction of Dharma Heritage (*fatong*), Han Yi put forward and strongly advocated a brand-new Confucian conviction of Dao Heritage (*daotong*) as a traditional Chinese doctrine to discredit the Buddhist one. Contrary to the abnegation of family and society, the other-world oriented tradition initiated by Buddhist patriarchs, Han Yi proposed that Confucian Dao Heritage had been created and sustained by the doctrine of this-world, establishing family, ruling the society and harmonizing the world, i.e., Confucian Saints before and in the Three Dynasties like Yao, Shun, Yu and Tang, and King Wen, King Wu and Duke Zhou in the Zhou Dynasty did usher into Chinese history a political and legal heritage of ruling this world by Dao: "Such a heritage was passed on to Confucius and Mencius, but lost its authentic trace after Mencius. Even some Confucian scholars afterwards like Xun Zi and Yang Xiong claimed to have inherited Dao from the previous saints, but Xun Zi failed in his pertinent extraction while Yang Xiong failed in his coherent explanation."² He went so far as to exclude Xun Zi and Yang Xiong, master Confucian scholars in the Warring States Period and the Han Dynasty respectively, out of Confucian camp, accusing Xun Zi for his failure in inheriting Confucian quintessence and Yang Xiong for his failure in explicitly advocating Confucian texts. There have been some points in accusing these two master Confucian scholars, Xun Zi being so also for two of his disciples, Han Fei and Li Si, who were the leading Legalists associated with despotic Qin Administrative engaging in Burning Books and Slaughtering Confucian Scholars (*fenshu kengru*) and Yang Xiong being so also for his imitating Confucian classics in creating his *The Grand Metaphysics* (*taixuan*) after *The Book of Changes* (*yijing*) and *The Doctrinal Analects* (*fayan*) after *The Analects of Confucius* which were unable to resist the introduction and wide acceptance of Buddha Nature Theory and Nirvana among Chinese in the Tang Dynasty. During his lifetime in the Tang Dynasty, Buddhism was so prevalent that Confucianism was eclipsed both in the plebeian and patrician classes. Such intellectual challenge reminded Han Yu of Mencius who in his lifetime rose against the then popular alien thoughts in Taoism and Mohism; therefore, he promised himself to defend Confucian doctrines in the courage of Great Husband from the constant incursions

² Han Yu, "Yuan Dao," in *The Complete Works of Han Yu* (*hanchangli quanji*) (Beijing: China Bookstore Press, 1991), Chap. 11, p. 174.

of Buddhism and Taoism. This was the motive of Han Yu in selecting *The Great Learning* from *The Book of Proprieties*, a collection of essays appeared in different chapters, as the basic theory in line with Confucian life philosophy, insinuating its metaphysical supremacy over Buddhist Dharma. Inheriting into Han Yu's perseverance for the established Confucianism, Li Ao started searching cosmological arguments among Confucian classics to refute the Buddha Nature Theory, which cosmologically grounded the Buddhist life philosophy in the form of Nirvana, and he finalized in choosing *The Doctrine of the Mean* from the same source, i.e., the Book of Proprieties, as cosmological arguments for Confucian life philosophy, mainly expressed in the rule of saints. With this academic endeavor he assumed to have enhanced the authenticity of Confucianism in Chinese intellectual tradition. In his estimation, there had been systematically reflected cosmologies in Chinese intellectual tradition which were finalized in the essay *The Doctrine of the Mean*, much before Buddhist cosmology was imported into China. He traced these indigenous cosmological reflections to Heaven-Mandated-Nature Theory, stating that Confucius himself had discussed the Way How to Elaborate on Heaven-Mandated-Nature to its Fullest Extent(*jinxingmingzhidao*) and Confucius' grandson Zi Si obtained this Way by a family bequest and narrated it in *The Doctrine of the Mean*, tutoring it to Mencius. But when Mencius passed away, the academic enthusiasm on Heart-Nature and Heaven-Mandated-Nature had been in recession before it was eclipsed by Buddhist cosmology based on Buddha Nature. Added to Li Ao's account of *The Doctrine of the Mean*, Zhu Xi in the Song Dynasty substantiated this academic genealogy with Zeng Zi, one of Confucius most favored disciples, and who had been the channel between Confucius and his grandson Zi Si. Zhu Xi explained that the motif revealed in *The Doctrine of the Mean* was the ideal rule of ancient saints like Yao and Shun, and when this secularly motivated ruling tradition was passed on to Confucius, he really met with an unprecedented predicament by A Saint with Virtue but without Position(*youde wuwei*) in contrast to the previous Saints with Both Virtue and Position(*youde youwei*) and thus Zhu Xi concluded: "Our master Confucius, though not being in ruling position, but being concentrative exclusively on virtue, has distinguished himself more gorgeously from ancient Saints Yao and Shun, morally revolutionized the Saint's ruling tradition."³ The clue as being stated in *The Doctrine of the Mean* "A Saint with Grand Virtue must have his high position, bountiful commissions, prestigious reputation and long life" paved the way for Zhu Xi in establishing an even higher position for Confucius than the ancient saints like King Yao and King Shun, the position as moral tutor for secular kings. Since the secular kings were regarded as the Sons of Heaven, their tutor must be the ruler of saint rulers, alluding his being identical to cosmological being, and that might be the most appropriate position agreeing with Confucius distinguished virtue and cogently leading to the Confucian Heaven-Mandated-Nature cosmology. After

³ Zhu Xi, "Preface to the Doctrine of the Mean(*zhongyong xu*)," in *Annotations to the Four Books(sishu jizhu)* (Changsha: Yuelu Press, 1987), p. 22.

Zhu Xi's explanation and argument, many Confucian scholars in the Song Dynasty were convinced of the proposition that Confucius definitely had a sacred position in the cosmos superior to that of ancient saints; the motto "If Confucius were not incarnated by Heaven's Mandate, human history would just have been remaining in dark" (*tian busheng zhongni, wangu ru changye*) began to be popular among Confucian scholars at that time, suggesting obviously that Confucius, though not crowned as other previous saint kings, had converted what had been initiated as great undertakings ruling the world under the heaven by King Yao and King Shun into a category of cosmological spirit, bequeathing it in the form of Heaven-Mandated-Nature Theory to Zeng Zi, from whom to Zi Si in the series of will-inheritance then to Mencius, resulted in the establishment of Zi Si and Mencius School (*simeng xuepai*) and the incipient tradition of Heart-Nature Scholarship. In connection with the first sentence "what has been mandated by heaven is the universal nature" in *The Doctrine of the Mean*, we can infer from Mencius' "The full performance of heart's function is to understand the universal nature, hence to testify the holy heaven's mandates" that the Integration between Heaven and Human (*tianren heyi*) reveals in essence the intellectual unity between cosmology and life philosophy, addressing the value for a cosmologically committed life philosophy in the form of Heart-Nature Scholarship and rejecting the alien life philosophy in Buddhist doctrine of Witnessing Nature by Heart Enlightenment by adhering to the Confucian political and legal traditions of the saint's ruling.

Based themselves on the philosophical and political implications made by Han Yu for his expounding *the Great Learning* and Li Ao for his expounding *The Doctrine of the Mean*, Confucian scholars in the Song Dynasty organized them into a series of textbooks in tutoring their disciples with *The Analects of Confucius* and *The Works of Mencius*, building up a stable and concise classic system for Confucianism authorized as The Four Books. The objective of The Four Books was to provide the prerequisite and paramount knowledge for Confucian intellectual tradition, overshadowing Buddhism in its other-world oriented cosmology and life philosophy and Taoism in its nature-oriented cosmology and life philosophy and creatively having transformed the Confucian tradition of this-world oriented cosmology and life philosophy. The newly renovated Confucian cosmology and life philosophy were very soon accepted to integrate with the official service examination, constituting the mega trends of Chinese culture in the form of Neo-Confucianism in the spirit of Ruling the World and Securing Its People (*jing shi ji min*) in succession of the Metaphysics in the Wei and Jin Dynasties and the Buddhism in the Sui and Tang Dynasties. The concepts of the Cosmic Dynamics (*zhong*) and Cosmic Harmony (*he*) in *The Doctrine of the Mean* were meticulously gauged and accentuated by Li Ao as the cosmological arguments for Confucian political and legal philosophies to update the previous Confucian reflections on their saint's ruling, and their theoretical charms cannot be over appreciated and afford to be ignored in studying the rule of proprieties regarding Chinese political and legal histories.

With its obvious features of cosmological reflection, *The Doctrine of the Mean* is often regarded as a classic peer to the most authoritative work in cosmological

tradition, i.e., *the Book of Changes*, being academically and terminologically abbreviated as the Unity between Changes and Mean(*yi yong*) or the combination of *The Book of Changes* or *Yi Jing* and *The Doctrine of the Mean*, and apparently such combination shows the influence of Taoism in terms of its nature-oriented cosmology. This association with *The Book of Changes* alluding the conceptual impacts from Taoism could help us better understand the incentive incursion from alien Buddhism which was introduced into China by its paralleling cosmology and life philosophy with Taoism and the committed defense of Confucian tradition by its adherent scholars. This historical and intellectual context was thus comprehensively commented by Professor Feng Youlan, a master Confucian philosopher of twentieth century: "In Confucian academic tradition, *The Book of Changes* and *The Doctrine of the Mean* are the most eminent classics directly influenced by Daoism, stimulating its philosophy in a more sophisticated dimension. As for the authors of these books, the popular acknowledgement is that Confucius authored *the Book of Changes*, but our latest research indicates that his authorship cannot be evidenced. The same situation about the authorship happens to *The Doctrine of the Mean*. We cannot say for sure that Confucius' grandson Zi Si had authored *The Doctrine of the Mean*, but rather be sure that some parts of the book is written by Zi Si, the rest of which is written and collected by his disciples. Evidently, both *The Book of Changes* and *The Doctrine of the Mean* are not the work of one person, i.e., either Confucius or his grandson Zi Si. But what is evident is that Daoism had influenced most of their authors. When one reads these sentences in Lao Zi (*Lao-tzu*) 'Dao consistently transcends all physical terms, thus remaining its onto' (Chapter 32) and 'When Dao, the onto, is physically represented, it reveals its instrumental features' (Chapter 28). Here we have clear contrast between metaphysical onto Dao and physical instruments Qi. The similar metaphysical clue is seen in *The Book of Changes* as 'It is only the metaphysical God that conveys a full speed overtaking all physical speeds, and a consummate destination discounting all physical marches.' The same elaborations in *The Doctrine of the Mean* as 'The cosmological entity bears mega sense of distinction without being seen, mega motion without being moved, mega accomplishment without being maneuvered' have a similar allegory in Lao Zi in its 'The narrow-minded person is bound to scoff at metaphysical Tao'. As metaphysical entity, we have these distinctive statements like 'What is metaphysical is what Tao means, what is physical is what instrument means' in *The Book of Changes* and 'As stated in *The Book of Poetry*, virtue can be fine as hair, which still comes into physical category. But heaven's entity is perfectly accomplished transcending all voices and tastes' in *The Doctrine of the Mean*. Such are the academic impacts from Daoism, pushing Confucian tradition further in metaphysical direction. Again let us see Mencius in his 'cosmic commitments in cultivating his mentality in a fully occupied space between heaven and earth' as well as 'incarnating oneself with cosmic creation', he was obviously in the mood for metaphysical transformation of astronomical heaven and geological earth. But Mencius, even his statements being eminently of metaphysical merits, did not seem to notify the metaphysical entity for fear of spoiling his Great Husband personality. Superior to him, I would highly praise the

authors of *The Book of Changes* and *The Doctrine of the Mean* for their full awareness in advocating metaphysical beauties. In terms of clearly articulated cosmology I would conclude that the authors of these two books are smarter than Mencius.”⁴ With Feng’s analysis and suggestion, I would here contribute to this assumption that there is a process in Confucian cosmology from intuitional ethical reflection to the ethically-oriented Integration between Heaven and Human, prominently influenced by Daoist nature-oriented cosmology in its procedural transformation. But this ethical cosmology of Confucian tradition being academically and pedagogically established with stabilized written texts as its classics, i.e. *The Four Books*, was ultimately the consequence of Neo-Confucian innovations in the Song Dynasty in responding to the challenges that the Buddhist cosmology in the form of the Buddha Nature Theory and the Buddhist life philosophy in the form of Nirvana had been posing.

Rule of Cosmological Harmony (*yun zhi jue zhong*)

As stated above, we do hold Li Ao creditable for these points, that he selected *The Doctrine of the Mean* from *The Book of Proprieties* as an independent classic, he contributed his own insights into the genealogy of the classic as being from Confucius to his grandson Zi Si, who in turn passed it on to Mencius, but Mencius’ demise caused the Heart-Nature doctrine ignored and depreciated. The oblivion of Confucian Heaven-Mandated-Nature in *The Doctrine of the Mean* or the Heart-Nature Scholarship in Mencius surrendered an ideological market for Buddhist and Daoist cosmologies to have performed an easy occupation. In campaign against these alien incursions Li Ao in the Tang Dynasty did manage to have a revival of Confucian cosmology with the consistency shown in the first sentence “The universal nature has been destined by heaven’s mandates” and the last sentence “Heaven’s entity is perfectly accomplished transcending all voices and tastes” in *The Doctrine of the Mean*, reminding readers that Confucius’ teaching on Nature and Heaven’s Way or Tao could not have come out from Zi Si.

But we should always bear in mind that what Confucius meant by Nature and Heaven’s Way was not the usual cosmology in explaining the origin and becoming of a physical cosmos, and what Confucian scholars inherited and developed from Nature and Heaven’s Way was its cosmological motif in justifying their ideology to rule the world under heaven and distinguished themselves from Buddhist other-world philosophy and Daoist nature-world philosophy. Therefore, the Confucian scholars in both the Tang and the Song Dynasties were still on the traditional track of Confucian rule of saints, having sought cosmological sources for consolidating their political and legal philosophies. Zhu Xi in the Song Dynasty made this

⁴ Feng Youlan, *The Complete Works of Three Pines Hall*(*sansongtang quanji*) (Zhengzhou: Henan People’s Press, 2000), Vol. 5, p. 59.

cosmological feature explicit in the preface to his annotated version: “Who authored *The Doctrine of the Mean*? Zi Si authored it simply for fear that Confucian doctrine might miss its track. Since our ancient saints have been ruling by heaven’s mandates and they have gradually established this ruling tradition sanctioned by heaven accordingly. Hence this ruling of saints had resulted in the Rule of Cosmological Harmony which Yao bequeathed it to Shun, and Shun to Yu with an inference to ‘The faculty of the human heart is its being diligent, the faculty of Dao heart is its cosmological subtlety. Since Dao testifies itself in cosmological One, Human should follow the Rule of Cosmological Harmony.’ What a great prophetic motto Yao made in one term, and Shun added three more sentences to facilitate its comprehension, leaving nothing to be desired.”⁵ Zhu Xi took the Rule of Cosmological Harmony as the kernel of *The Doctrine of the Mean*, revealing the top secret of ancient Confucian saints in their ruling. It was assumed that Saint Shun apprehended the quintessence of Yao’s motto and interpreted it in an extended form of “Sixteen Words Motto”(shiliuzi zhenyan, Shun’s four expounding sentences are expressed in sixteen Chinese words) to admonish his political successor Yu the Great. In the Confucian genealogy of saint rulers, Yao, Shun and Yu are the most veteran saint kings, among whom Yao and Shun are legendary saints ruling the world under the heaven for public good, and their political succession was accomplished in such a way known as gentleperson-transfer of throne (*shanrang*). the most desirably peaceful mode of charming personality and graceful politics, shedding eternal glories on the idea of recommending saint by abdicating one’s own throne(*xuanxianyuneng*) and the institutional principle of appointing people by their merits(*renrenweixian*) in the service examination system. Confucian scholars tend to believe that Saint King Yao abdicated his throne to recommend Saint King Shun for his being saint, and Saint King Shun did the same to Yu for his subduing the flood in benefiting the world under the heaven. But when Yu the Great declined into old age, he bequeathed his throne to his son Qi, starting a hereditary rule in Chinese political history by transforming “ruling for the public good” (*tianxiaweigong*) into “ruling for selfish one family”(*tianxiaweijia*), and this shift of ruling for selfishness of one family, one clan and one nation instead of for public good has become the constant condemnation of Confucian scholars. According to Confucian political logic, the ruling for selfishness is destined to constitutional dictatorship and its dictator’s moral corruption, and only social revolution proves to be its remedy. Such a logic frequently testifying itself in eulogizing the power shifts in the Three Dynasties by “Revolutions conducted by Tang Shang and Zhou Wu Wang are justified by heaven’s mandates as well as human morality.”⁶ In their understanding, convinced by either legends or historical documents, Confucian scholars are always in good terms with two forms of power shift: gentleperson-transfer of throne and

⁵ Zhu Xi, “Preface to the Doctrine of the Mean(*zhongyong xu*),” in *Annotations to the Four Books* (Si Shu Ji Zhu) (Changsha: Yuelu Press, 1987), p. 21.

⁶ Ge, Tuan Ci, *The Book of Changes*. (*zhouyi, tuanci ge*).

revolution. To them both gentlerperson-transfer of throne and revolution have their supreme legitimacy in the heaven-revealed morality. Heaven, being a natural and substantial body, gives birth to both human physical structure and moral conscience, as Mencius quoted from *the Book of History (shangshu)* : “Heaven created human beings, consecrating their monarch and tutor.”⁷ In this quotation, monarch symbolizes the actual political ruler while tutor the moral conscience of society, both being combined in evidencing sanctity and validity. The same conviction is also sensed in Confucius in his praise to Yao: “When Yao called Shun: Hai, Shun, The throne is destined to you by Heaven’s Mandates, just follow the Rule of Cosmological Harmony. Even the secular world being surrounded by poverty and hardship; you will enjoy eternal guardianship from Heaven. And this holy admonishment Shun also passed on to Yu.”⁸ The Confucian faith and mindset in the Integration between Heaven and Human might tell that Heaven does not stand for the cosmology in explaining natural evolution, but more importantly reveals human spirit in natural justice, esp the political and legal sanctity and validity. So the vocabulary pertinent to moral, ethical, virtue, or legitimacy in Chinese is in fact the two-word combination: Dao for cosmological dynamics and De for cosmological phenomena, be it physical, biological, botanical, mineral or social. And Dao De, or the cosmological virtue, conveys the synthetic implications of both natural evolution and human value.

What Zhu Xi assessed as the principal theme was the Rule of Cosmological Harmony, being expanded into the following four sentences to testify its full sense: The faculty of human heart is its being diligence, the faculty of Dao heart is its cosmological subtlety. Since Dao testifies itself in cosmological One, Human should follow the Rule of Cosmological Harmony. But Confucian scholars have never furnished themselves with documentary evidence to confirm whether Yao bequeathed Shun the Rule of Cosmological Harmony and the four sentences were the actual administrative philosophy Yu inherited from Shun. It is highly possible that Zhu Xi himself concluded them from his observations and reflections on relative Confucian classics. For my understanding, the Rule of Cosmological Harmony might be what Zhu Xi briefed from a sentence in *The Doctrine of the Mean* in connection with another one relative in *The Analects of Confucius*, for the former we have: “What an intelligent king Shun is! He is good at inquiring and deducing from simple words; he is considerate of encouraging what is good and discouraging what is evil; he is always ready to accept suggestions from the opposite perspectives but apply in his ruling only what he proportionately evaluated. And this is his greatness!” and the latter we have: “When Yao called Shun: Hai, Shun, The throne is destined to you by Heaven’s Mandates, just follow the Rule of Cosmological Harmony. Even the secular world being surrounded by poverty and hardship, you will enjoy eternal guardianship from Heaven. And this

⁷ Liang Hui Wang Xia, *The Works of Mencius*(mengzi, lianghuiwang xia).

⁸ Yao Yue, *The Analects of Confucius* (lunyu, yao yue).

holy admonishment Shun also passed on to Yu.”⁹ But the four sentences before Zhu Xi’s preface to *The Doctrine of the Mean* were first to appear in the pseudo-version of *The Book of History*(*shangshu*) presented to Emperor Yuan(*yuandi*)by Mei Ze in the Eastern Jin Dynasty. I, personally, do not see much sense to distinguish the four sentences concerned whether they are the admonishments from Shun or the later annexations. The sense lies more with the agreement of these sentences with Confucian Integration between Heaven and Human than their documentary sources, for they are eligible as intellectual resources for Confucian scholars in their political and legal philosophies. To explain the insights into the Rule of the Cosmological Harmony, Chen Yi, another master Confucian scholar in the Northern Song Dynasty, had this analysis regarding the four sentences: “People have their selfish hearts, tending not to be diligent, but heaven has a cosmic heart, tending to be metaphysical subtlety. In this contrast we see value in its metaphysical origin. Such an origin is the justification of our secular rule and therefore the rule of the cosmological harmony reflects the zenith to which our rule may ultimately attain.”¹⁰ In this context we see that Zhu Xi in his addressing the four sentences did not outshine what had been pinpointed by Chen Yi, but he did distinguish himself in spotlighting what had been stressed in the incipient statement in *The Doctrine of the Mean*, i.e. the Heaven-Mandated Nature as the Cosmic Heart(*daoxin*), and Zhu Xi aligned this to the principle and objective for human insistence on being universally benevolent. I might thus paraphrase his stress and logic: the Cosmic Heart epitomized the natural rationale, being obligatory in guiding human behavior in diligence. For there is subconscious selfishness at each human physiological heart, a cosmic heart must be introduced to curb it from becoming recklessly egotistical. Given all the academic merits both Chen Yi and Zhu Xi contributed in their heuristic expounding on the central themes of *The Doctrine of the Mean*, I still see their failures in attaining the sophistication of the classic itself and the elaborated anticipation in repudiating Buddhist doctrines by Li Ao in his ardent advocacy for it.

If we agree with Professor Chen Yinke in his judgment about *The Doctrine of the Mean* compiled and edited in Dukedom Qin of the Warring States Period, I should further infer that the essay was the collection of critical reflections by Confucian scholars on Legalist utilitarianism and political despotism in Dukedom Qin and its dominant interest might not be totally confined in the adherence of human heart to cosmic heart, but rather that human heart avails itself of cosmic heart as its holy principle and objective to evaluate and transcend the secular politics and legalist doctrines favored in Dukedom Qin. With this clue we could cogently read those sentences by Confucius in *The Doctrine of the Mean*, such as “It is possible to rule substantially the dukedoms and the world under the heaven, it is also possible to resign political posts and service salary, to brave fatal swords,

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi, *The Posthumous Works of Chen Brothers* (*er cheng yishu*) (Shanghai: Shanghai Classic Press, 1991), Chap. 19, p. 202.

but it is impossible to accomplish the rule of cosmological harmony.” “The rule of saint is to punish the convict by similar amount of his harm caused to his victim, thus being instrumented for rectifying the evil deeds.” “Politics acquires its validity in human applications, while earth its vitality in trees.” “Confucius thus stated: Knowledge is easy to be obtained by dedicated studies, humaneness by its earnest application, and courage by self-sensed shame. These three sorts of human qualities enable us to cultivate personality gracefully, to rule people humanely and to rule the world under the heaven harmoniously.” “What a great principle that Saint Kings justified themselves in ruling! It is the cosmic principle that helps create every physical being, as donating universal grace for all under the heaven. In its marvelous emulation, our saints invented and introduced for his rule three hundred ritual forms and three thousand obligatory codes. This political and legal mechanism is readily applicable only for the people conscientiously committed.” These statements, whether uttered by Confucius himself or edited so in his stead, divulged visible political and legal evaluations to dispute legalist utilitarianism and its despotically embodied Dukedom Qin, with the rule of saints, humaneness personified in gentleman, and saint kings like Yao, Shun, Yu, King Wen and King Wu as symbolized concepts against those legalist dogmas instrumentally expressed as legalities, positions, and contraptions. Therefore, these statements can be assessed as insights into actual political and legal issues at the time when they were assorted and edited by Confucian scholars. In the frame of Confucian Integration between Heaven and Human, such conceptions as Heaven-Mandated-Nature, Cosmological Dynamics or otherwise Dao De and Cosmological Harmony are themselves abundant in humanistic value orientation and political philosophy, being more than physical consequential correlations between cosmological dynamics and its human representational phenomena. Now we may come back to Han Yu again for his approach to cosmological dynamics (*daode*), he believes that cosmological dynamics in Confucian tradition is distinguished from Daoist tradition in its this-world orientation rather than Daoist nature-world orientation, ridiculing the latter with the allegory of observing heaven by sitting in the well. His remark was this: “When Lao Zi belittle Confucian humaneness, he disgraced himself more than Confucius, like the guy sitting in the deep well, and his observation of heaven reflects his own narrow vision rather than that of heaven.....So what the cosmological dynamics claimed by Lao Zi is not what I maintain; what the cosmological phenomenon is not what I maintain either. What I maintain as cosmological dynamics and phenomenon is the unity between humaneness and righteousness, being benevolent for public good. Lao Zi, in his conceptions of cosmological dynamics and phenomenon, naturally purified from Confucian humanistic virtues, reveals only what is privately good for his observations.”¹¹ From the perspective of Confucian in vesting cosmological dynamics with human values, the rule of cosmological harmony in *The Doctrine of the Mean*

¹¹ Han Yu, “Yuan Dao,” in *The Complete Works of Han Yu* (*hanchangli quanji*)(Beijing: China Bookstore Press, 1991), Chap. 11, p. 172.

cannot be simply apprehended as following the natural doctrine of cosmos in general, but should be associated with the natural justice in its being applied in social ruling, its humanistic value being outlined as the four sentences by Confucian saint kings. In the social context before the Qin Dynasty, Confucian scholars edited such an essay with an obvious political and legal orientations distinctive to that of Legalist and its constitutional personality, the despotic Qin Dukedom, but in the Tang Dynasty, Han Yu and Li Ao for their advocating *The Great Learning* and *The Doctrine of the Mean* respectively had their very clear-sighted objectives in repudiating Buddhist enlightened individualism and Daoist immortal incarnate by stressing Confucian social great personality and in refuting Buddhist other-world philosophy and Daoist nature-world philosophy by adhering to Confucian rule of this-world philosophy. Specific to *The Doctrine of the Mean*, Li Ao, stimulated as well as inspired by the natural fairness in “All natural beings have their Buddha nature in essence” and the natural justice in Daoist cosmological evolution, advocated the Restorative Nature Theory(*fuxingshuo*), integrating epistemological heart specific to human with cosmological nature to universe in innovating its heart-nature doctrine in Confucian tradition. By suggestion of Confucian heart-nature doctrine in *The Doctrine of the Mean*, Li Ao managed to unite what might otherwise be alienated in Buddhist and Daoist philosophies back to Confucian ethical personality and humanely oriented politics, invigorating the true sense of rule of proprieties(*lizhi*) or rule of virtue(*dezhi*) embodied by Confucian saint kings to the negation of the Rule of Inaction(*wuwei er zhi*) in Daoist natural philosophy and the Rule of Family and World Abandonment (*chujia chushi*) in Buddhist Nature-Emptiness-in-Cosmological-Interdependence(*yuanqi xingkong*).

In fact, I should link the four sentences first appeared in Mei Ze’s pseudo version of *The Book of History* and the phrase “The Rule of the Cosmological Harmony” in *The Analects of Confucius* with Xun Zi in his interpreting the ruling of Saint Shun. In one chapter of his book, he wrote: “In ancient times, Saint Shun ruled the world under the heaven by not commanding specific affairs, yet everything has its due course to self-realization. To be diligent with One, grace goes to everyone automatically; to worship One for its cosmological subtlety, grace becomes visible before discernible. Therefore the *Cosmological Doctrine*(*daojing*) declared, ‘The faculty of human heart is its being diligent, the faculty of Dao heart is its cosmological subtlety.’ Only enlightened saints are qualified in seeing the margin between being diligent and cosmological subtlety.” And he thus highly praised the Confucian saint kings as “Saint is the perfect embodiment of human, and king of constitution. Saint King, being perfect in both human and his constitution, attains what is perfect in the world under the heaven.”¹² Perfection is the criterion for each physical category, if it is achieved in that category, it implies the realization of its cosmological doctrine. In Confucian tradition, the advocacy of “manifesting himself in the universe”(*biaobing yuzhou*) and “saint’s aspiring after

¹² Unravel Perplexities, *The Works of Xun Zi*.(*xunzi, jiebi*).

the Heaven”(*sheng xi tian*) aims at the integration between human volition and cosmological doctrine. So the rule of saints in Xun Zi also reflects its adherence to natural justice revealed in cosmological harmony, which has no selfish entity expressive of certain category but can be referred to its cosmological heart expressive of all universal categories. With its cosmological doctrine or Dao Heart unidentified, universal beings thus have their physical identities respectively, and this ontological and cosmological dialect can be comparable to that of “the one and the many” in ancient Greek philosopher Plotinus, which suggests convincingly the relations between cosmology and ontology as dancing partners in a model of Unity in Diversity. The faculty of human heart notifies itself in apprehending the faculty of Dao heart or the cosmological doctrine, to contain its own selfish smallness and imitate the cosmological greatness in bringing about all universal beings. Therefore, Confucian saints are distinguished in their rules of society in the spirit of cosmological fairness and justice. By stating that saint kings are perfect in both human and constitution, we mean they are the embodiments of the perfect social rules matching cosmological fairness and creative validity. In such logic we may say that Confucian scholars in the Song Dynasty were smart when they condensed the four sentences in *The Doctrine of the Mean* into the moral principle of “universal benevolence over individual profits”(*dagongwusi*), demanding that in social rules we should, from our human heart, honestly follow this moral principle revealed by Dao heart, implementing the rule of the cosmological harmony. The concept of harmony in this context is nothing quantitatively moderate, but more a substantially universal doctrine in cosmos evolution, from which human can infer their social justice as to respect and safeguard each social member its right to exist. With Xun Zi’s clue of “The faculty of human heart is its being diligent, the faculty of Dao heart is its cosmological subtlety”, we could better understand the natural rationale and justice in the rule of Saint Shun and the political and legal philosophies of the Confucian editors in *The Doctrine of the Mean* in repudiating Legalist instrumentalism in ruling people, while insisting on the integration between cosmological harmony and human social ruling. Finally another point still merits our attention that the Confucian scholars in the Tang and Song Dynasties did not confine themselves in the intellectual campaigns against Daoist Nature-World philosophy and Buddhist Other-World philosophy, but politically committed themselves in transforming the cosmological yet moral principles traditionally worshipped by them into an administrative rule of saint ideology for an ideologically confused Chinese society.

Natural Justice Revealed in *The Doctrine of the Mean*

Though in *The Doctrine of the Mean* Confucian editors focused their attention on the rule of saints and the political reflections on politics and legality, still they remained their academics on the authoritative track of the Integration between Heaven and Human, basing themselves on cosmological doctrines in reflecting on

human rules, specifically elucidating Confucian political and legal philosophies by uniting natural fairness and justice with human intuition and rationale.

In terms of natural doctrine in the universe, the Mean(*yong*) in *the Doctrine of the Mean* may signify any natural phenomenon in the universe as the means to cosmological end. In Chinese terminology, the Mean(*yong*) can be phonetically identical to Application(*yong*), which bears transformative sense of empirical world contrastive to Cosmological Doctrine (*ti*, contrastive to *dao*). But the relations between Cosmological Doctrine and its Application also tells the unity between their metaphysical entity and physical beings, being attributive with messages of cosmic vitality and natural justice, and this unity can also be expressed with one Chinese word *Cheng* or cosmic dynamics. This intellectual backcloth is significant in apprehending the insights of *The Doctrine of the Mean*. Now let us come to both the first and last sentences in the essay, which are “The universal nature has been destined by heaven’s mandates”(the first) and “Heaven’s entity is perfectly accomplished transcending all voices and tastes”(the last), so from beginning to the end, *The Doctrine of the Mean* seems to accentuate its interpretation on cosmological evolution and its natural status, but a patient scrutiny on the contents between them would disclose the intention to infer the moral norms and social rules of Confucian dimension by comparing cosmological doctrines and natural justice. From human sensation and cognitive principles, cosmos is a generalized unity between natural principles and their evolutionary phenomena: “With its subtlety, cosmological entity cannot be visibly sensed, being the absolute otherness as Cosmological One, so a gentleman should be sanctimoniously aware of the Cosmological One. Before the senses of being happy, angry, sad, and pleased, there existed cosmological entity; when this entity represents itself proportionately in all physical beings, there comes cosmic harmony. Therefore, cosmological entity is the grand norm in the world under the heaven; and cosmological harmony is the perfect evolution. In the unity between cosmological entity and harmony, heaven and earth are distinguished with their respective faculties, which hatch out and nurse up all physical beings.” As phenomena sensed in human cognitive faculty, being happy, angry, sad, and pleased are visible or perceivable, but hidden deep behind there exists their metaphysical entity which is invisible and subtle, being the essential nature of all beings. If such an essential nature can be represented through rational norm and proportion, the natural principles and harmony will be sensibly revealed, so as to avoid the chaotic situations in human expressions like “fluctuation between being happy and angry”(xīnwūchāng), “being too pleased to be gentle”(dèyīwāngxīng) and “tragedy caused by ecstasy”(lèjīshēngbēi). These perceivable feelings and senses are what human beings can infer to evaluate the cosmological harmony, equally admonished in *the Great Learning* as “Cosmic dynamics as entity One can only be perceived by its physical beings, so a gentleman should be sanctimoniously aware of the Cosmological One.” Here, the Cosmological One is the absolute otherness that witnesses the universe in its evolution, identical to Cosmological entity as being expounded that “The Cosmic dynamics is the Dao of heaven,...The cosmic dynamics remains as the cosmological entity before representing itself in universal

beings". In the due sense, the Cosmic dynamics naturally manifests heaven's nature. The human implications in cosmic dynamics in the natural evolution were also inspiring to Zhou Dunyi, a well-known Confucian scholar in the Song Dynasty, who, in his interpretation of human justice, traces the origin of political and legal justices to their relative cosmological sources: "What a prodigious universe it is! It just gives rise to all beings their existence. It reflects the cosmic dynamics in its creative origin. Cosmological evolution gives rise to each natural being its nature and life, thus accomplished the cosmic dynamics."¹³ But for Confucian scholars, whether in the pre-Qin dynasty or in the Tang and Song Dynasties, they did not stop where the cosmological entity or cosmic dynamics was embodying only natural principles or laws, they purposely explored into their implications in human ethical and political rationale, i.e., the natural justice and their transformative values in politics and legality: "Saints model themselves after the heaven in its due rule and administration.... If not in the principle of natural fairness and justice, saints can not be clear-sighted and steadfast in their ruling and administering."¹⁴

Confucian scholars focused their attention on the cosmic dynamics in relation to natural principles in the evolutionary process, but their efforts soon divulged a humanistic orientation in the phrase "Perfect Cosmic Dynamics never ceases to help produce in the cosmos (*zhichengwuxi*)", which openly attests its prodigious vitality and generosity, setting up a universal example for human politics and legality to learn from. Therefore in Confucian philosophy we also have "The Cosmic Dynamics in Human" as parallel to "The Cosmic Dynamics in Heaven or Nature", where "Perfect Cosmic Dynamics never ceases to help produce in the cosmos", being matched with "Perfect Human Dynamics never ceases to motivate himself in his undertakings." It is in this humanistic comparison that *The Doctrine of the Mean* declares: "It is the perfect cosmic dynamics that can embrace universal nature; it is the universal nature that can embrace human nature; it is the human nature that can penetrate into the nature of substance; if he can penetrate into the nature of substance to its utmost, human just gets himself involved in the cosmological evolution; if he commits himself to cosmological evolution, human is thus integrating himself with heaven and earth in their evolutionary process." Grounding on nature in referring the universal rights to exist reveals the concept of natural fairness and justice, and Confucian scholars encourage and praise human involvement in witnessing such fairness and justice and recommend them to be the paramount principles for social politics and legality, as being adhered in *The Doctrine of the Mean*: "A gentleman is highly appreciated for his accomplishing the cosmic dynamics", and "The way to manifest the cosmological subtlety is to be incarnated with it by human involvement." In this context of Confucian ethical

¹³ Zhou Dunyi, "Cosmological Dynamics(*cheng*)," in *Universal Scholarship (tong shu)*(Shanghai: Shanghai Classic Press, 1992),Chap. 1, p. 3.

¹⁴ Zhou Dunyi, "Penalty(*xing*)," in *Universal Scholarship (tong shu)* (Shanghai: Shanghai Classic Press, 1992), Chap. 2, p. 45.

cosmology, the cosmic dynamics is not the absolute otherness like creative God in the west, but the absolute otherness integrating human intuitional conscience and his empirical world, by which the natural evolution, cosmological fairness and natural justice are manifested. Such cosmological ethics and human subjective sanctity are henceforth addressed to those Confucian Saints like Yao, Shun, Yu, Tang, King Wu, their ruling being the applications of natural justice. When they decreed policies and ruled by proprieties, they never allowed an inch in betraying natural rights and justice revealed in cosmological evolution, and that is why Confucius responded Ai Gong in Dukedom Lu in his political counseling with the necessary ties between cosmological nature and humanistic politics: “The politics of King Wen and King Wu was implemented by their decrees and rules. As being saints, they had their politics accomplished vigorously; but when they passed away, their politics gradually declined into oblivion. Politics acquires its validity in human applications, while earth its vitality in trees. To administer politics is to water the reeds. Therefore, to administer politics is to be dependent on man, to appoint man in position is to evaluate his personality, to cultivate personality is to follow Dao or cosmological principle, to follow Dao is to manifest humaneness. Humaneness is being witnessed in loving one’s parent, righteousness is being witnessed in respecting the social nobles. Proprieties as rules are being administered in loving appropriately one’s family members with different kinships and respecting distinctively the social nobles with their ranks. Without superior support the lower rank might not be able to rule successfully. That is why we say a gentleman should cultivate his personality, to cultivate his personality he should begin from loving his parents, to love his parents he should learn to understand human, to understand human he should refer it to heaven.” This discourse on politics by Confucius in *The Doctrine of the Mean* should be associated with the first paragraph stated as “The universal nature has been destined by heaven’s mandates, to attest this universal nature is to apply Dao or cosmological dynamics, to inculcate Dao is to carry out education. What can be called Dao is imminent in everything, otherwise it can not be Dao. Therefore a gentleman should be diligent on what is invisible, be vigilant on what is inaudible. With its subtlety, cosmological entity can not be visibly sensed, being the absolute otherness as Cosmological One, so a gentleman should be sanctimoniously aware of the Cosmological One.” In their association, we could easily see the humanistic revelation that secular education on proprieties has acquired from the Heaven-Mandated-Nature faith or cosmological doctrines. From the visible exhibition of cosmological beings we could tell the universal benevolence and natural justice of the cosmologically invisible subtlety, and its being Cosmological One(*du*) is the absolute principle that has been guiding the whole cosmic evolution which commands our diligence and vigilance in cultivating and ruling. In this respect, ancient Saints like Yao, Shun, King Wen, and King Wu have set up examples in successful ruling. In other words, short of the virtue in modeling after the cosmological harmony, no ruling could be peacefully achieved and maintained. By this association and inference, we are able to explain the entry “rule of human” as “rule of saints in their modeling after cosmological harmony”(shengren zetian zhizhi). In such type

of Confucian rule, “human” embodies the cosmological personality of natural justice, expressive of immense fairness and absolute equity, more cogent to “the rule of law” in the west rather than to its “rule of person” in the consecrated monarchism. For Confucian rule of humans, a virtue sanctified by cosmological harmony is positioned above the sovereign to transform human into saint, and this ethical containment only admits the saint kings as the model “rule of human” like Yao, Shun, Yu, King Wen, and King Wu. All monarchs or kings unguaranteed by cosmological harmony are just disdained as despotic and duped, like Xia Jie and Shang Zhou being nicknamed as “solitary public thieves” (*dufuminzei*).

The social ruling principles and humanistic spirit revealed in the cosmological doctrines in *The Doctrine of the Mean* are authentically elucidated by linking with moral personalities in Confucian saints Yao, Shun, Yu, King Wen, King Wu and Duke Zhou, and such elucidations are complementary to the discourses on social and dukedom ruling made in *the Analects of Confucius*, which excavated full humanistic merits from the cosmological vitalities in promulgating universal moral rights and humaneness-oriented politics, hence consolidating its administrative principles and spiritual roots. Being cautious of this consecrated linkage, Confucius eulogized Saint Yao: “What majestically Saint Yao ruled! What the grandeur of heaven he worshipped and modeled after! How gorgeously he administered his politics that people feel unable to find proper words in its praise!”¹⁵ His exclamation inspired more commentaries on natural justice and social equity by later Confucian scholars in connection with cosmological doctrines: “Human being acquires his physical body in cosmological substance Qi. So when we discuss human nature, we must trace it to a natural heaven. If he knows his cosmological ties with heaven, he should follow what heaven’s mandates. In Xi Ci, *the Book of Changes*, there is the document that Bao Xi ruled the world under the heaven majestically by observing the heaven and the earth their principles. It also tells the story that Yellow Emperor, Yao and Shun ruled the world under the heaven by tidy dressings, distinguishing coats and trousers vertically like upper sky and downward earth. So from ancient times on, all saint kings have been ruling in adhering to cosmological principles.if more explanation needed, we could say that the grandeur of heaven suggests holy height and being politically gorgeous suggests longer rule for more populations...what betrays proper words in praise is virtue shown in Yao’s ruling. For words in praise, Huang Fumi expounded that whatever is beneficial attracts people to praise in words, but words are also introduced to disgrace evils. As for cosmological benevolence, no one can specify it, it has attained unbiased perfection in benefiting universal beings, leaving no words feasible in praising. What man can describe is heaven or nature being identical to cosmological dynamics. Such principle applied in social ruling requires no special favor for ruler’s son and fair treatment to his subjects. Nature manifests itself in punishing what is evil and award what is good. So the rule of cosmological harmony attests credit for merit, yet free from over reputation, and penalty for

¹⁵ Tai Bo, *The Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu, taibo*).

crime, yet free from over torture. Such ruling principles copied from cosmos are conventionally applied in people's daily lives, with no visible efforts in matching words."¹⁶ In this context, heaven is not only the source of human biological life, but also his holy principles from which all social norms are derived. From their conviction that ancient saints ruled by cosmological principles that consequently led to Society of Grand Harmony (*datong shehui*), Confucian scholars summarized that human society must be ruled by cosmological principles since a natural harmony has been formed in its evolutionary process. In Confucian vocabulary, either *Grand* in Grand Harmony or *Great* in Great Way(*dadao*) just signifies the value orientation of rights to live, fairness, justice, and equity exhibited in cosmic evolution. So all saint kings openly declared their commitments to heaven's mandates, following Great Way in achieving Grand Harmony, like Yao, Shun and Yu who engaged themselves in "uniting the world into a family and China a personhood."¹⁷ Based on both legendary and historical documents on these saint kings, Confucian scholars declared the Rule of Person or the Rule of Saint Kings(*renzhi*) to be the best political constitution for Country-Ruling and World-Harmonizing(*zhiguo pingtianxia*), i.e. the Humaneness-Oriented Politics(*wangdao renzheng*). This idealized type of rule is also the theory that Confucian scholars justified themselves in criticizing Legalists' rule of legality and their despotic politics in Dukedom Qin. In their political and legal discourses, Confucian scholars accentuated the heaven's virtues in equity for all cosmological beings and in justice for cosmological harmony (to be confirmed by phrase "cosmological evolution gives rise to each natural being its nature and life."*qiandao bianhua, gezheng xingming*), seen in Qian Tuan, *The Book of Changes*) The sanctity and authenticity in the Heaven-Mandated-Nature not only proves to be the spiritual manifestation that cultivating saint king personality, but also spotlights Confucian constitutional merits in containing monarchal powers by virtue, at least achieving in forcing the imperial administrative orders decreed in the form of "Following the Heaven's Doctrine, His Honorable Emperor thus Decrees"*(fengtian chengyun, huangdi zhaoyue)*. And eventually inspired and nurtured by this Confucian constitutional virtues, the powerless Chinese plebeians rose against monarchal powers in defiance of the son of heaven(emperor) in a position of the people of heaven "performing the political mission in Heaven's stead" (*titianxingdao*). To recall the famous example given in the Rule of Person: "Revolutions conducted by Saint Tang and King Wu are justified by heaven's mandates as well as human morality." Generally speaking, in the means of cosmological beings and human daily lives Confucian scholars validated their political and legal philosophies in the cosmological harmony via *The Doctrine of the Mean* and the coherence between cosmological entity and Confucian constitutionalism, exemplified in "Cosmological

¹⁶ Liu Baonan, "Notes to Tai Bo, Authentic Introduction to The Analects of Confucius(*lunyu zhengyi*)," in *Anthologies of Master Scholars (zhuzi jicheng)* (Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Press, 1986), Vol. 1, p. 166.

¹⁷ Universal Ruling, *The Book of Proprieties*.(*lij, liyun*) (Changsha: Yuelu Press, 1989), p. 371.

harmony must witness its certainty and validity in three successive kings durable in history, between heaven and earth identical to cosmological doctrines, in convincing ghosts and spirits with religious commitments, in persuading future rulers with administrative miracles. By convincing ghosts and spirits a saint ruler shows his worship for heaven and by persuading future rulers a saint ruler shows his respect for human. Therefore a saint ruler motivates with heaven's mandate, activates with heaven's principle, voices with heaven's rules." In their parallel and coherence, I would not grudge my commentaries on Confucian scholars in editing and advocating *The Doctrine of the Mean* that cosmological doctrines have contributed natural fairness, justice and rights to exist and that human should transform them into social fairness, legal justice and political equity. Such secular and creative transformation, to my conscience, is also the moral obligation for Confucian adherents or ordinary Chinese for they are anticipated by Xun Zi as "most valuable species in the natural world for his integration of universal substance, animated life, intellectual faculty and moral righteousness" and also by Zhang Zai as "To testify a cosmic heart between heaven and earth."

Ideal Politics in the Rule of Saint King

Once Confucius was quoted as saying in *The Doctrine of the Mean* that: "Only gentleperson can adhere to the doctrine of cosmological harmony, while narrow-minded person acts against the doctrine of cosmological harmony. This comparison means that gentleperson acts in accordance with the cosmological doctrine while the narrow-minded person violates the cosmological doctrine volitionally." The term 'gentleperson' and 'narrow-minded person' symbolizes moral personality by Confucian scholars rather than their biological and social status, conscious of moral and political attitude towards cosmos including human natural life by human beings. This is the stance that Confucian scholars take to spotlight 'ought' in social rule inspired by natural harmony in the cosmos, much similar to that of 'ought' in the human right endowed by Nature. 'Ought', in this case, stands for idealized value human has attributed to cosmic nature which a gentleperson is consecrated to refer to as the most authoritative intelligence for his political and legal philosophies, while a narrow-minded person just regards cosmic nature as the source of 'the law of jungle' devoid of any human value that his political and legal philosophies only tell 'is', as the legal positivist proclaims. And it is this very insistence on 'ought' that encourages Confucian scholars to stick to their moral value and religious commitment agreeable to harmonious cosmos, such intellectual and spiritual aspiration in *The Doctrine of the Mean* has been stated as 'human cultivation' or 'saint inculcation', with gentleperson in spiritual attainment in that sense while narrow-minded person in despising 'ought' in a harmonious cosmos.

The gentleperson and narrow-minded person differ themselves in perceiving the cosmological harmony not only in their subjective reflections and subjective evaluation on natural cosmos but also in their comprehensions on social relations

and governmental rule. Zhu Xi thus explained their difference: “Based on the same cosmic doctrine but different cosmic substance, so human beings are evolved with diversified physical sorts, saint being cautious and moderate in following the doctrine of cosmological harmony by applying the rule of proprieties, music, punishment and administration. In the true sense of human he should accomplish his human qualifications by cosmological doctrines and saint instructions, both revealing holiness for human behavior.”¹⁸ To him, a narrow-minded person failed in being cautious and moderate in following the doctrine of cosmological harmony, being the incarnate of excess or insufficiency. Only a gentleperson can achieve the doctrine of cosmological harmony in its appropriateness, deriving sacred yet valid political and legal philosophies from cosmic rationale. Therefore an ideal rule of the country should be identified as ‘the rule of ritual and music’, complemented by penal codes.

From the natural cosmological doctrine, Confucian scholars perceived and estimated what the social rule could be the most suitable to human being, the answer being the rule of saint kings like Yao, Shun Yu, King Wen, King Wu, Duke Zhou who had been ruling China in the principle of cosmological harmony before Confucius. In their rule or administering politics, the doctrine of cosmological harmony is thought to be identical to natural justice, a value transcendent of actual social norm and political doctrine assuring its validity in constructing secular politics and legal institution. Such natural justice builds up a cosmological model justifying idealized politics and rule of proprieties in the pattern of the integration between heaven and human, it functions itself in terms of methodology and target desired in social relations and human law. This is metaphorically stated by Confucius in *The Doctrine of the Mean*: “It is possible to rule substantially the dukedoms and the world under the heaven, it is also possible to resign political posts and service salary, to brave fatal swords, but it is impossible to accomplish the rule of cosmological harmony.” From the perspective of cosmology and natural rights, all the social or secular accomplishments are possible to be done by human efforts, by which man will not curb its efforts, his ambition burning with ‘the grand norm’ and ‘the perfect evolution’ identical to cosmological harmony in renovating political and legal systems, and its effort and ambition reveals his pursuit of social idealism witnessing a universally predestined harmony. The dialectics in this context tells the feature of ‘ought’ in cosmological doctrine and ‘is’ in human social rule, while the world of value unveiled in a vibrant and harmonious cosmos sets up a model for human politics and law, that is why Confucius thus concluded the value of the cosmic doctrine: “The cosmic doctrine never distances itself from human, and if human adopts the cosmic doctrine to alienate human relations in society, he just violates the nature of such a doctrine.....Therefore, a gentle duke endeavors his politics in social ruling, confining his policy in remedying ill behavior. A committed loyalty and tolerance should

¹⁸ Zhu Xi, “To The Doctrine of the Mean(*zhongyong zhangju*),” in *Annotations to the Four Books(sishu jizhu)* (Changsha: Yuelu Press, 1987), p. 26.

coincide with cosmic doctrine, so do not impose on others what you would not be imposed upon.” If we believe that human being is superior to other animals, the reason is exactly exposed in *The Doctrine of the Mean* that he can apply what has been revealed in the cosmological harmony in social ruling and administering human relations. He approaches natural justice as universal ethical base in a fair social regulation, the golden doctrine of society being accordingly generalized as “treating people in his capacity as a human being, and being treated vice versa.”¹⁹ In the similar clue, Confucian scholars established a humanistic touchstone to regulate social relations and administer politics, that is, to govern the people by respecting their natural rights and dignities. The humanistic principle of ruling is inherited consciously and morally from the cosmological doctrine harmoniously governing the universe, its natural philosophy epitomized in “universal fellow beings thrive on equity, and universal doctrines function well respectively.” To Confucian saint kings and scholars like Yao, Shun, Yu, King Wen, King Wu, and Confucius, humanistic principle originated and inherited from cosmological doctrine is ‘the unity of self-disciplined loyalty and other-considered tolerance’ (*zhongshu*), that is, cosmological doctrine endows universal beings with right to exist in natural justice while humanistic doctrine in its holy imitation endows people their moral right to love and respect their fellow beings. Such natural justice and moral right has another similar assessment in *Tao Te Ching* by Lao Zi (*daodejing*) or Lao Tzu: “Dao provides universal dynamics for physical beings, De represents Dao in concrete physical beings, the physical beings (*wu*) constitute observable beings, their potentials (*shi*) help make what these physical beings substantially tangible.”²⁰ In the intellectual context before the Qin Dynasty when Lao Zi and Confucius were busy in creating their schools of thought, moral rights for them were universal natural rights to live and sustain revealed in the cosmos, ‘the unity of self-disciplined loyalty and other-considered tolerance’ proves to be the universally applicable principle for lives, being worshipped as ‘grand norm’ and ‘perfect evolution’ in social rule and legal institution. This is the intellectual prototype for Confucian scholars in advocating the rule of virtue (*dezhi*), attributed to the rule of cosmological harmony by Saint Kings Yao, Shun, King Wen and King Wu, for their legendary ruling miracles, interpreting the cosmic grandeur of selflessness in serving all universal fellow beings and spotlighting the sanctity and eternity of natural justice and ideal politics so dearly cherished in the Heaven-Mandated-Nature of Confucian faith.

In Confucian political philosophy, the Heaven-Mandated-Nature is not confined in enunciating the universal nature of a physical cosmos, but directs its attention on social objective for human endeavors and leading principles in social regulation, resulting in the ‘historical’ pattern of the rule of saint kings by legendary resources. They do not care whether this frequently cited rule of saint kings is

¹⁹ Zhu Xi, “To The Doctrine of the Mean (*zhongyong zhangju*),” in *Annotations to the Four Books* (*sishu jizhu*) (Changsha: Yuelu Press, 1987), p. 34.

²⁰ Chapter 51, *The Works of Lao Zi*.

based on historical events, simply because they are chiefly concerned with the social and political ideal of ‘self-regulating, family establishing, country ruling and world harmonizing’ despite the fact that “the hereditary doctrine from Yao, Shun, the Three Kings[Yu, King Wen and King Wu], Duke Zhou to Confucius has never been fully applied between heaven and earth in a single day.”²¹ But Confucian scholars in the whole span of Chinese history have never ceased to worship the rule of saint kings as the idealized political constitution with irresistible intellectual charm, a convincing argument being Confucius’s designation as ‘uncrowned king’(suwang) in *Gongyang Commentary to the Spring and Autumn Annals* in the Han Dynasty. And even in the Reform Movement of 1898, a well-known master Confucian scholar Kang Youwei was advocating enthusiastically about the type of reform in the principle of ancient rule of Confucius, and no one was authentically curious more about his liability to confirm Confucian actual rule as a saint king than suspect the congruence between his idealized Confucian constitution with the current political situations. For the disparity between the idealized rule of saint kings and the war-torn social situations in his life time, Confucius himself was clearly sighted, that was why he did not demonstrate whether Yao, Shun, Yu, Tang, King Wen, King Wu and Duke Zhou had actualized ‘the virtue of the cosmological harmony’, but stressed the ‘ought’ value in it as the orientation for idealized politics, as stated in *the Doctrine of the Mean*: “The metaphysical doctrine catering to gentlerperson is often eclipsed by physical cases. For ordinary people, such principle is also perceivable, but its consummation even gets saint mentally befuddled. For ordinary people, such principle is also applicable, but its consummation even causes saint physically disabled. The grandeur of metaphysical world constitutes permanent attraction for human being in what physically unattainable.” The cosmic doctrine revealed in the rule of cosmological harmony is identical to what a Confucian termed gentlerperson aspires for, its ‘grand norm’ and ‘perfect evolution’ being eclipsed as invisible to the visible empirical world. So what means extraordinary to a gentlerperson is not what is physically visible or empirically attainable, but what is metaphysically invisible, or empirically unattainable, thus a cosmic doctrine in the sense of political and legal institutions is not what has been perceived and applied in the imperial rule of consecutive Chinese dynasties, but its incarnate in terms of the rule of saint kings. And accordingly, the cosmic doctrine in Confucian political and legal philosophies have acquired the import of ‘ought’ transcending the reality of ‘is’ in human rule, thus justifying Confucian scholars in commenting Yao and Shun as being fallible and King Wu and Duke Zhou with full filial piety in a sense of physically ‘is’, despite their being often eulogized metaphysically perfect. With cosmic doctrine standing for metaphysical ‘ought’, the physical ‘is’ in Confucian political and legal philosophies can be more attractive and convincing to politicians or gentlerpersons in their social or administrative undertakings, as all human social activities need to be ultimately

²¹ Zhu Xi, “To Chen Tongfu,” in *The Complete Works of Zhu Xi(zhuxi ji)* (Chengdu: Sichuan Education Press, 1996), Vol. 3, p. 1592.

justified in holy sources: “King Wu and Duke Zhou have behaved in their rule with perfect filial piety, for they are good at carrying on their predecessors’ commitments and undertakings. They performed properly the sacrificing rituals in the suburbs to please Heaven Master, and in ancestral temples to please their ancestors. If one understands thoroughly the sacrificing rituals in connection with cosmological dynamics, one can apply that dynamics in social ruling as handling it in his own palm.” When devotedly expressing their pious sentiments towards ancestors and Heaven-Earth Spirits, Confucian scholars are clearly demonstrating their convictions towards life eternity in the form of family continuance, but for politicians or administrators such religious rituals obviously symbolize their ambitions and aspirations for decent political moral and social ideals. So conviction for family continuance and political aspiration express the same feeling for Chinese, but at different levels for they both gear into the ideal type of intellectual commitment to life, either in family or social contexts, there we see the unity between family and country in terms of life, and the integration between the rule of family and the rule of a country. Therefore, the advocacy of ‘ruling the world by filial principle’(yi xiao zhitianxia) gained in popularity in the prosperous and powerful Han Dynasty, and Being Great and Graceful of Han People(*hanren xiongwei*) in the Han Dynasty was thought to be the historical and political witness to Confucian rule of cosmological harmony by some scholars, its intellectual traits being generalized as ‘Human Obligations to Heavenly Mandates’(tianrenganying). Among a dozen of Chinese dynasties, only Han and Tang are labeled as ‘the Golden Times of the Han and Tang Dynasties’(hantang shengshi), simply because they are believed in Confucian political and legal traditions to have actualized in their rules the cosmic principles in a possibly physical extent, that is, in their enlightened imperial policies and ambitious emperor personality.

Conclusion: Reflections on Political and Legal Philosophies by Cosmic Dynamics

In the mind-set of Confucian integration between heaven and human, *The Doctrine of the Mean* does not confine itself in a superficial method of no-more-no-less, but inquires into the cosmological entity through daily phenomena and its humanistic alluding to the fundamental principles and ultimate objective in fulfilling Confucian secular missions of self-regulating, family establishing, country ruling and world harmonizing. To its realistic policy at minimum, I would not negate its method or useful ways in self-protection and surviving hardships, like the phrase in *The Book of Poetry*: “to protect oneself is to be wise” or the speculative warning from Xun Zi: “To speak out properly is to be wise, and to keep silent properly is also to be wise.”²² But I am more attentive to its cardinal theme: “What a great principle

²² Refutations against Twelve Thinkers, *The Works of Xun Zi* (*xunzi, fei shi er zi*).

that Saint Kings justify themselves in ruling! It is the cosmic principle that helps create all physical beings, as donating universal grace for all under the heaven. In its marvelous emulation, our saints invented and introduced for their rulers three hundred ritual forms and three thousand obligatory codes. This political and legal mechanism is readily applicable only for the people conscientiously committed. Therefore the virtue has not been nurtured to its utmost, the cosmological doctrine would not accompany; a gentleman would not be content before attaining perfect virtue and cosmological doctrine is incarnated on him, his goal is set at integrating with cosmological subtlety and ruling with cosmological harmony. His undertaking is enriched by consistently learning from the past and honestly applying proprieties. When in high rank, never lord it over others; when in lower rank, never betray his superior. When politics is amenable, contribute his suggestion for the country; when politics is abhorrent, just keep silent for self-protection. Bear in mind the sayings in *The Book of Poetry*: “To know how to protect oneself is to be both clear-sighted and wise.” At first glance, these sentences seem to make a summary for *The Doctrine of the Mean*, but it also exposes itself to some theoretical confusions. Therefore, I feel obligatory to differentiate it in my own conclusion.

What has been enunciated by Confucian scholars as ‘saint’s rule by modeling after the heaven’s virtue’ can be abridged as ‘the rule of person’ or ‘the rule of virtue’, a more generally used term being ‘the rule of proprieties’, in Confucian intellectual context. What has been exclaimed as ‘majestically’, ‘grandeur’ and ‘universal grace’ is not identically confined to physical beings in an empirical world, but implying a transcendent sense in Chinese traditional faith for heaven. They are cherished as the ultimate resources for saint’s ruling, alluding to ‘perfect virtue’, ‘cosmological doctrine’, ‘nurture virtue’, ‘cosmos incarnate’, ‘integrating with cosmological subtlety’ and ‘ruling with cosmological harmony’, with these ultimate resources ‘ritual forms’ and ‘obligatory codes’ are legally justified and sacredly motivated. The person in the rule who is both identical to and consecrated by perfect virtue personifies the transcendence above secular powers and good or evil state politics, and his free will vested by Heaven-Mandated-Nature exists in the holy world of evaluation, how could it be that such a person or saint ‘to be wise to protect himself’ in the secular world of calculation? So the summary provided in these sentences does not coherently reflect what ‘the rule of saint kings’ or ‘the rule of cosmological harmony’ in *The Doctrine of the Mean* is implying regarding ‘cosmological subtlety’. “When politics is amenable, contribute his suggestion for the country; when politics is abhorrent, just keep silent for self-protection” can be comprehended as wise means, but if only being observed as pure methodology it could straightly spoil the perfect virtue in the rule of cosmological harmony. In this context, I feel regret to notify that the editors for this Confucian classic simply plunged themselves in intellectual confusion and embarrassment.

Now, what might be a comparatively appropriate concept to summarize *The Doctrine of the Mean*? Before directly coming to answer, I should stress some points relatively necessary again: that the classic was edited for ideologically combating legalist utilitarianism in Qin Dukedom, and it was rediscovered and

recommended in the Tang Dynasty to meet intellectual challenge from Indian Buddhism and finally it was selected and interpreted in the Song Dynasty to revive secular Confucianism, esp its idealized social ruling. With these and other backdrops concerned like Xiao Yuan, Han Yu, Li Ao, Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi, a cogent concept to integrate the cosmological dynamics with the rule of saint kings might be ‘cosmic dynamics’ (*cheng*), which has been frequented as metaphysical entity to channel between heaven and human. For heaven, it suggests “Perfect Cosmic Dynamics never ceases to help produce in the cosmos”; for human, it embodies “Perfect Human Dynamics never ceases to motivate himself in his undertakings”. As revealed in *the Book of Changes*, “The Cosmic Dynamic is affluent in bringing about everything, so a gentleman in the same spirit may accomplish whatever may be accomplished (*tianxingjian, junzi yi ziqiangbuxi*).”²³ we can link it convincingly to what has been stated in *The Doctrine of the Mean* about cosmic dynamics: “The Cosmic dynamics is the Dao of heaven, and to attain the cosmic dynamics is the Dao of human. The cosmic dynamics remains as the cosmological entity before representing itself in universal beings and attains its human incarnate without much intellectual endeavor. To rule gracefully in line with cosmological harmony is to exhibit his being saint. To attain cosmic dynamics is to dedicate in applied perseverance.” And it is this concept that explains why *The Book of Changes* and *The Doctrine of the Mean* are often merged into one entry in Confucian scholarship as *Yi Yong*. A prime minister of the Song Dynasty named Sima Guang, who spent 20 years in editing *The History as a Political Mirror* to highlight Confucian political and legal philosophies, had tutored his student Liu Anshi with the entry ‘cosmic dynamics’ for 5 years. This anecdote might also spark some insights into the concept ‘cosmic dynamics’. I may here also introduce the relevant comments by a contemporary scholar Yu Ronggeng, whose specialized academics is Confucian legal thoughts, as my supportive sources: “‘It is only the cosmic dynamics in its full application that the world under the heaven could be ruled harmoniously, for it exclusively testifies the cosmological entity and evolutionary principles.’ The sentence here quoted from *The Doctrine of the Mean* suggests that a person incarnated with the cosmic dynamics is able to establish the grand natural law, attain the cosmological virtue and understand evolutionary process. By cosmic dynamics, *The Doctrine of the Mean* conveys such message that it is only the saint with cosmic dynamics who is eligible to create human laws harmonious with heaven’s mandates. Therefore it leads us to the concept of saint in legislation.”²⁴ I would also make more comments based on his summary: Saints in legislation in heaven’s stead can be associated with another popular Confucian concept ‘By nature all human fellow can be translated into a saint’ in addressing political rights equal to everyone. Any adherent to Confucian Heaven-Mandated-Nature Theory is equally vested with moral rights and political rights in terms of ‘rationalizing,

²³ Qian Xiang, *The Book of Changes*. (*zhouyi, qian xiang*).

²⁴ Yu Ronggeng, *An Introduction to Confucian Legal Thoughts* (Nanning: Guangxi People’s Press, 1998), p. 574.

self-regulating, family establishing, country ruling and world harmonizing' by universal rationale or cosmological dynamics echoed with his intuitional conscience. Therefore, I would agree with Yu's summary in refuting that of confining *The Doctrine of the Mean* in methodology in administering empirical issues, for his is academically responsive to the motivation and objective for its editors and advocates in both Qin Dukedom and the Tang as well as the Song Dynasties. The striking feature, if I may stress this way, of Confucian intellectual tradition is that human by his nature identical to cosmic dynamics can initiate his cognitive faculty of heart to integrate his soul with the cosmological doctrine, uniting his political and legal ambitions with the sanctity and authenticity of heaven's mandates. By this integration and unity he is optimistically conscientious of his moral right and social obligation, applying his political and legal philosophies in terms of 'performing the political mission in Heaven's stead' (*titianxingdao*) and living a role model in 'incarnating Dao in his body' (*yishenzaidao*). His conviction and perseverance in the cosmic dynamics and the rule of cosmological harmony exercises moral restrictions on secular political powers, propagating the universal human rights in Confucian context which are normally expressive of natural rights for lives and moral rights for politics.

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